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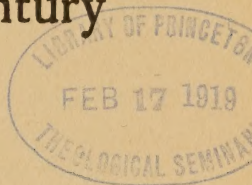
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The Apostles' creed in the
twentieth century

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Twentieth Century

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By

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Preface

THE unknown origin of the Apostles' Creed gives it a peculiar significance. We trace the Ten Commandments through the Scriptures to the voice of God on Mount Sinai, we trace the Lord's Prayer to the lips of Christ, but the arrangement of the articles of the creed is not found in the Scriptures. We cannot trace the creed to any council of the Church—such councils simply adopted it as already existing—nor to any group of men—nor to any single man. And there seems no foundation for the tradition that the Apostles themselves arranged the articles of their belief.

The creed seems to have arisen progressively in the early Church until it assumed its present form as a spontaneous confession of the truths preached by the Apostles and their successors. The real Apostolic Succession is not only of preachers but specially of preaching. What would be the spontaneous confession of the whole Church to-day of the truths now being preached in its pulpits is a crucial question.

Certainly that kind of preaching which founded and fostered the early Church so markedly is commended to the preachers of

to-day. The proclaiming these basal truths progressively and in due proportion and in ways to meet modern questionings and purposes, will produce the faith that voices itself in the creed. There is a great craving for such preaching in the souls of men and women to-day—and the more thoughtful they are the greater is the craving. This book is sent forth with the lofty design to foster that kind of preaching and to satisfy that kind of craving of the soul.

F. S. S.

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I.

He that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.—HEB. 11:6.

“ I BELIEVE IN —— ”

THE origin of the Apostles' Creed is unknown. A popular tradition assigns it to the Apostles themselves. The last time they gathered in Jerusalem as they were about to go into all the world to preach the Gospel to all races of men they agreed upon the great articles of their message, each Apostle giving a single statement making up the whole twelve articles. There is no foundation for the tradition except in the number and character of the articles. The creed as a whole was not in use earlier than in the sixth century, though various statements found in it are referred to by writers before that time. Since that time it has been in general use in all branches of the Christian Church, as it is now in the Greek, the Roman and the Protestant Churches. It is frequently used in the formal worship of the Church as well as in private devotion, and is probably held in the memory and spoken by the lips more than any other form of words except

only the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer.

Before we consider the needs and uses of such a creed and the meaning of its particular articles it will be well for us to give fair and close attention to the first words, "I believe in." They are spoken clearly: the tone of conviction, the clear eye of certainty, the willingness to define and describe what one believes, the ability to give good reasons for what one believes are all clearly embraced in the words. There is no trace of credulity to be found—of vagueness or exaggeration or unreason.

When we glance down the articles to find the objects of this belief we find two classes: first, persons; second, conditions—or certain facts and circumstances of our lives. These are evidently religious in their nature. This then is a religious belief. Does that differ in essence, in kind from ordinary belief, or simply in its direction to religious objects? We commonly use the word faith for religious belief—and we sometimes think and speak of faith as if it were a power different and distinct from our natural powers—a peculiar endowment possessed only by a selected few. The Apostle Paul says "Faith is the gift of God." That is certainly true: but it is not only true of religious faith, it is true of all kinds of faith—that is, it is true of our power to believe. All our powers

are gifts of God. We did not make a single one. Secular belief is not a special kind of belief but belief directed to what we may call secular objects: and here are also the two great classes, persons, and conditions or circumstances of life. Here too belief may have the stages of credulity as well as in religion—of vagueness, exaggeration and unreason; these show the power to believe has been neglected or abused. So religious faith is not a special kind of belief but the power to believe directed to religious objects.

But what is this power? Examining our own natures, what is the power to believe—what is embraced in it, and what does it do for us?

In the first place it is the source of our knowledge. Our knowledge in any department is based upon sufficient evidence. Our knowledge is the correspondence of our thought of any particular thing with the thing itself; the degree of our knowledge is in this correspondence; is it full or only partial? We say we know things when we see them. There is no belief in that, is there? Yes, there is, the very highest kind of belief. We believe in our senses. In our sense of sight confirmed by our other senses. When, for instance, we see a tree, we know it exists, because we have seen trees all the days of our lives, and we have felt of them, climbed them, picked fruit from them, heard the

wind blow through their leaves. We believe in our senses, when we know trees exist.

Besides the knowledge by our senses there is that we call scientific knowledge. Much of this with even the most learned in such lore is the result of our belief in the testimony of others. Few of us have had opportunity to pursue investigation in chemistry, in geology, in biology, but others have investigated and we believe their statements.

We have seen but a few thousand twinkling stars; but astronomers with their instruments and calculations tell us that there are millions of flashing suns in the heavens so large and so far off that their light has taken years, centuries, thousands of years to reach us; and now we look at the twinkling stars, the flash of light of distant suns, and know the suns exist because we believe the astounding statements of astronomers. So we at once recognize that our knowledge of history and of other races of men and of foreign lands is the result of our belief in the testimony of historians, of anthropologists and of travellers.

So with the knowledge we have from our reason we compare things or statements with each other and our conclusions are wise only as we obey the laws of logic as we believe we have discovered them. So we know our minds and these laws of the mind exist.

In the second place there is in belief, especially in relation to persons and personal matters, a power which we may call insight.

The child learns of the existence of many things through his senses, the little world within the house, the wide beautiful world out-of-doors with its ceaseless changes; but he is just as certain of the existence of his mother's love. True, he has constant evidences of this in his mother's care and so believes; but beyond that is this power we may call insight; his love for his mother is itself a sensitive soul power that recognizes his mother's love.

Just so belief discerns the unseen in man. By sight we discern the features of a man's face, by insight we discern the features of a man's character, his honesty, his justice, his kindness, his love for his fellows. As in the case of the child there is evidence of all this in the man's action—and we believe on evidence; but here also is the power we call insight. For there is this strange element in the knowledge of persons. One must have something of the quality he recognizes in another in order to recognize it at all. Personal acquaintance, surely personal friendship, can only come from the power within us to recognize and appreciate that same power in another. One must have some honesty, truthfulness, purity, to recognize these qualities in another. This power finds strong

expression in that common phrase in business and social life, I like that man, I believe in that man. So also with reference to personal matters of choice and action. Persons of kindred views and feelings combine through these to accomplish certain acts. So we form parties to advance causes, in politics, in civil reforms, in national action.

When we come to express this in strong terms we use the word belief—I believe in that party, in that reform, in that national action. So also the strength of a man's character—the power of his insight to see the point involved, the dedication of his whole personality to such action, is seen in the emphasis he places upon the chosen phrase, I believe in that cause. I will work for it, sacrifice for it, even if need be die for it. I believe in it. I have faith in it.

In the third place belief may include the element of trust, stronger than that does in its nature include it, I think, but in this case the will may hinder its exercise; so we may say trust comes into exercise only by the command of the will. We may believe a bank has large resources and is well managed, is worthy of trust. But we do not trust our money to it—perhaps because we do not feel the need of it—we have so little money; perhaps we already have our little money in another bank. The will certainly comes into the question. That

man is worthy of trust. I believe in him. But I do not need him—or I prefer to place my interests in another’s care—or for some reason I dislike him; anyhow I do not trust my affairs to him. Or the reverse is true: I believe in him. I am in need. I will put my case in his hands. We are very familiar with this element of belief. We exercise trust every day, sometimes in most important matters. We trust our lives to the physician—our good reputation to our lawyer—our property to our bank, as well as the multitude of lesser interests. Greater interests still: the bride at the altar trusts her life and happiness to the man she believes in, as he trusts his to her.

We may regard belief in the fourth place as a principle of action. A man must believe in farming, in mining, in manufacturing in order to devote himself to these callings—to master the details, to make the best use of his powers. So the artist in poetry, in music, in sculpture, in painting must believe in the high ideals he holds of his work to reach out patiently, constantly, enthusiastically to attain them.

Now to sum up our reasoning thus far: we see that belief enlarges our powers, opens the whole sphere of knowledge, leads us to appreciate each other, has the element of personal trust and gives a principle of action.

We may imagine a case that will illustrate

its wonderful power. We imagine an Indian standing four hundred years ago on the shore of our country and looking off upon the ocean. His knowledge is bounded by the distant horizon; he may wonder what is beyond, but knows nothing. As he watches a white something comes over the rim of the horizon. It is not a cloud—it is on the ocean—it is a ship. Soon a little boat comes from the strange ship and strange men, white men, come to him. They stay several days, find means of communicating with him. They tell him of far distant lands—of great cities, of a civilized life, of strange races of men.

Now the white men leave him. The ship sinks beyond the horizon, and the Indian stands again alone upon the shore. But now the horizon bounds his vision but not his knowledge. He knows of the ship, of the white men, of the distant land, of great cities, of other races of men, and their lives.

Belief has given, we may well say, broader views, has enlarged the horizon of the mind.

Now we may further imagine the white men come again and now remain with the Indian a much longer time. The Indian finds he likes the white men the more he becomes acquainted with them. Some powers in him bind him to them; from this there is awakened a trust in the white men, and this at length leads to action.

The white men now get in their boat and row back to the ship. They lift the sails and the ship sinks below the horizon. But this time the Indian goes with them. He intrusts his life to their care. He shares their aims and purposes and leaves his old life for a new one in the distant lands, in great cities, among strange people. His belief in the white men has given him new knowledge, new associations, new life.

We now go back to religious belief and ask, What does the Church mean by these first words of her great creed—"I believe in ——"? Evidently she includes all these elements in the power to believe we have just been considering. It includes belief as the source of knowledge. The Church, or the individual believer, says: "I have a certain knowledge whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his word." The writer of the Hebrews says: "Faith is the conviction of things unseen." It is always so—in all affairs as well as in religion. No one has ever seen his senses, but he is convinced they are true. No one has even seen the truthfulness of a witness, but he is convinced of it. No one has ever seen the nobility of a friend, but he is convinced of it. Faith sees the unseen, we say; it simply is convinced of its existence.

We may easily recognize in what respect un-

belief has a moral fault in it—is to be condemned—not only in religion, but in all directions. It lies in the refusal to investigate, to look for the evidence, possibly from indolence, possibly from dislike for the subject. There is evidently more fault in the one case than in the other. One disbelieves in the attraction of gravitation or that the earth is a globe—we pity rather than blame him. One disbelieves in honesty, righteousness, self-devotion to a cause, does not admire or even recognize such qualities. Such unbelief may spring from moral causes; the impure may disbelieve in the pure. There is always the ignoring of evidence; there may be such a dislike of it that one closes the eyes to it, or even is unable to see it.

Now truth in nature is disdainful of man's ignorance or dislike. If we disbelieve still the truth remains unchanged. The captain of the big steamship ignores the chart; his great ship runs upon the rocks just as surely as if he had designed it to do so.

Calmly, quietly, the majestic universe moves on; its sequences are never interrupted. Believe in it and with inexhaustible generosity nature rewards belief. Doubt it, disbelieve it and act in ignorance or hate, and with remorseless sternness nature punishes disbelief.

In religious matters there is this element as well. Our text says, "Without faith it is im-

possible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” It is so always. You cannot come to anything or to any person without believing in that person or thing, and that your coming is worth while. Belief then in religion in the first place broadens our views, enlarges our knowledge. So in the second place there is insight and trust in it. We are persons and created in the likeness of God, and that likeness, though blurred by sin, is not destroyed. There are in our nature certain personal powers to discern certain personal qualities in God. There is also in our nature the power of personal trust. If one recognizes his need and that God in Christ is willing and able to supply that need the believer trusts Him. We do not cling to a memory of a far-off historical Christ—that is knowledge and necessary. We do not cling to a marble statue of Christ, something we have constructed to vivify our emotion. But we believe in Christ as living and present, and loving us, and powerful to save, and we trust Him as our personal Saviour. So the Church, including each individual believer, has all this in these first words of the creed—“I believe in ——” We believe in Christ, trust Him for forgiveness of sin and new life and daily grace. We place our personal trust in our Saviour,

There is also in belief the principle of action. The little band of twelve apostles has grown into an organization of many millions. As it has advanced through the ages it has constructed splendid edifices for the worship of God, many great institutions for the culture of man, many agencies of alleviating the sufferings of mankind and has wrought in the institutions of society many beneficent changes.

There was recently dedicated a monument at Plymouth in honour of the pilgrim fathers. The conception enshrined in granite is worthy of the event it commemorates. In the center is a lofty statue of a woman representing Faith. She is gazing towards the ocean; one hand points towards heaven, the other holds an open Bible. Round this central figure are four colossal statues representing Morality, Freedom, Education and Law. This faith monument at Plymouth suggests that belief has been a principle of action in our land—as it is to-day—and ministers largely to our well-being and welfare in Morality, Freedom, Education and Law.

Now we cast a single glance to the future life.

If a man refuses to examine the evidences, if he does not believe in God, nor trust Him, nor live in His service, his life here is narrow and poor and low. A vast realm of knowledge is closed to him—gives him no insight, no trust in God, no lofty principle of action. In what-

ever condition such a one may be here or hereafter he misses the riches of belief in God.

But if one has believed in God, his mind has been broadened, his spiritual insight quickened, his trust realized, his principle of action aroused and made strong; and now he goes into the future life. As the Indian of our imagination a little while ago, the believer sails with the one he trusts beyond the horizon to a new life.

The requirement of belief in God as the entrance into salvation is not an arbitrary enactment. We cannot conceive of any other way. And we all know the way is open and free to all who will choose to enter upon it.

II.

For through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father.—EPH. 2: 18.

USES AND ABUSES OF A CREED

BEFORE attending to the particular articles of the Apostles' Creed it may be well for us to consider the nature and uses of a creed and the spirit in which it should be held; and then further the marked features of the general arrangement of this special creed.

Some one has said that one does not know a thing or fact until he can tell it. Psychologists tell us that the mind has for its main object the adapting the whole organism to its environment; that the knowledge it receives by the senses is not clear and full until it in some way expresses itself in appropriate action.

When one believes a truth he makes it more clear to himself by defining or describing it, and in this way he commends it to the attention and acceptance of others.

This is not only true of a single truth or fact but is emphatically true of a series of related truths. The nature and use of the particular

truth can be seen only when its relation to other truths is recognized and the nature and use of the whole series of truths can be seen only when they are clearly expressed in their order, and so carried out into appropriate action.

It is thus in the nature of the human mind to have a creed, and it applies to all the affairs of life as well as to religion. The one who learns a trade has a creed—the carpenter knows how to hit a nail on the head. The difference between a good farmer and a poor one, between a successful stock-broker and a failure, is that the one knows his creed more fully and thoroughly—so thoroughly that he puts it in practice quickly and accurately.

It is so also with science. Every text-book of science states the particular truths of that science in their order and proportion. Our knowledge of any department of nature, as astronomy, geology, biology, is a creed of that department.

Now it is quite evident that the more clearly and concisely the truths of any department of nature can be stated the better for the complete grasp of the mind. And it is equally obvious that such concise statement of any great department may be the subject of much needed elaboration.

The headings of the chapters of a book on geology will state the various geological ages,

and each chapter will fully describe each age; so in astronomy the different kinds of heavenly bodies; so in biology the different orders of vegetable and animal life. Concise, clear statements of truths in their proper order and proportion form creeds on various subjects. It requires clear knowledge and great care to prepare them. When well prepared they are of great value, though they may require much elaboration for their full understanding.

The Apostles' Creed is therefore, as indicated by its name, a concise, clear and comprehensive statement of the truths of religion as taught by the Apostles in the Scriptures. It was made in the far past by students of the Scriptures: by whom we do not know. But they investigated the Scriptures to find the truths; they arranged the truths in what seemed to them the proper order and proportion according to the demands of the human mind, and we have the result of their work. Other creeds have been formed since, some of them far more elaborate, especially those formed in Reformation times.

The nature of a creed, therefore, is to state the truths of any department of nature and revelation in clear terms and in proper order and proportion.

The use of a creed, therefore, is to secure a higher kind of knowledge than can be gathered

from considering only isolated truths. Each truth sheds light on related truth, and on the harmonious whole in its completeness and grandeur. It stimulates the spirit of investigation; the men who made it may have erred in statement or arrangement, and we are stimulated to go to their sources of information and find out for ourselves under their guidance. This particular creed deserves respect and veneration in that many succeeding generations have thus investigated it and commended it. When we are stimulated to such research we are following worthy examples.

The first use of a creed is, therefore, to lead to wide and clear knowledge. This particular creed has in this regard great value from its conciseness; it can be held in the memory easily and is often repeated with the voice still further fixing it in the mind.

Our knowledge in any great department when we contemplate the whole sphere of truth makes us humble; we know so little in our short lives and with our small powers. But when we compare our knowledge not with spheres of truth but with that of our fellow men it may make us arrogant and arbitrary. The Apostle Paul in teaching Timothy commended a creed and especially taught him how to hold it. "Hold fast the form of sound words in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." We are to hold fast

the creed we believe in, but not arrogantly in pride over others, or trying to force its adoption by others, or condemning others for not embracing it—but “in faith and in love in Christ Jesus”: believing in Him and having His spirit.

A second use of a creed, therefore, is it is the heart of a loving message to our fellow men, the basis of Christian teaching. The believer reciting the creed in worship—the Church in adopting the creed proclaims and commends it to the world. It virtually says we have received this statement after due investigation. We commend it to you as a clear, concise and comprehensive statement of truths of vast importance, the truths of religion. Investigate them, and accept them as far as our testimony will help you, and come thereby into the fellowship of believers and advocates. Our doors, our hearts are not only open, but have a great welcome for all.

It is a great abuse of a creed when it is relied upon as having authority in itself; it is only a guide in the study of Scripture commended by an honoured course of such study; it is a great abuse when it fosters bigotry and intolerance, when it frowns upon candid investigation, when it crushes freedom of thought. It should always lead to the investigation of nature and the Scriptures; it should always lead to the love of

mankind, to persuading men to be seekers of God to their highest welfare.

The first and second great uses of a creed are thus pervaded by the third, which cannot be separated from them except as we may hold it before our thought. It is not only to foster knowledge and keep it as free as possible from error, it is not only to give a clear message, a proclamation to the world, but it is to foster an experience of its truths and so to promote a life. Creeds in other departments are to lead to action. Surely a creed in religion is dead indeed unless it promotes life; it must live in the believer and so preach in his life as well as in his words.

Truths not merely defined and described as knowledge and proclaimed in words but experienced, influencing the depths of our nature, swaying our souls and lived out in loving lives before the world, these form our creed—this it is to believe, to have faith. Faith believes on sufficient evidence, is the insight in personal matters, has personal trust and becomes thus a principle of action; this faith has for its objects persons and conditions, as we see at a glance at the particular articles of this creed; and we can only reach the uses of a creed when it sways our lives.

Thus the Apostles' Creed is an inheritance from the past; it sways the life of the present

and so is proclaimed to the world, and thus it is handed down as a rich treasure to future generations.

Let us now consider the marked feature of the general arrangement of the Apostles' Creed. A single glance at the whole creed shows there are three Persons the objects of our belief, and that each Person is the source of special conditions of our lives: the Father, of our creation, the Son, of our redemption, the Holy Spirit, of our sanctification; and still it is quite evident the creed does not speak of three Gods but emphatically of the one only true and eternal God.

The way in which we are to believe in each of these three Persons and of their acts towards us will be considered fully as we pass along the articles of the creed. We have now to consider what is called the doctrine of the Trinity—that there are three persons in the unity of God. As the creed leads to the investigation of Scripture we ask, How does the Scripture present this doctrine? In the first place it is very emphatic that there is but one God. Jesus Christ sums up the teaching of the Scripture when He says, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." Just as emphatically Jesus also speaks of two persons when He says, "I and the Father are one," "The Father is in me and I in the Father." Just as clearly Jesus also speaks of three persons

when He says, "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

The Church in all the ages has kept this truth prominent in her worship when she uses the formula of baptism Christ gave her as stated in the last chapter of Matthew's Gospel, and in her use of the Apostolic Benediction written by Paul in the last chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

In the one God then, according to the teaching of the Scriptures, especially according to the teaching of Jesus Christ, there are three persons—that is, there are three distinctions which are spoken of and which act and speak of themselves, as persons.

When we speak of a person we mean an intelligent conscious being independent in existence and action of all other such beings but in close relations with them. We may be sure the Scripture does not contradict itself, also that it no more requires us to believe what is absurd than to do what is sinful. God is not one Person and three Persons in the same sense. We may say with assurance that the distinctions in the divine nature which act and speak of themselves as persons are not limited by our idea of personality formed from our small experience, and that they in no sense conflict with

the unity of God, the Person. Much thought has been given to this great subject through the ages, many definitions and distinctions have been made and even great controversy has been awakened, but little advance has been made. We are in the face of the mystery of existence. We cannot comprehend the mystery of our own little existence; surely we are not able to comprehend the mystery of God's existence. In nature we are assured of the existence of God by His works, but the manner of His existence is but dimly seen. Having the revelation of this Trinity in the Scripture we may look again at His works in nature and see that they give some intimations of this mode of His existence. The sun gives forth three powers in one—light, heat and electricity. The matter of sun and earth, of the wide universe, is bound in one by the atom, the force and the law. Our own being is threefold—physical, mental and moral: body, mind and soul may each use the word person.

But the mode of God's existence can be only made known by Himself, in nature dimly and if He chooses more fully in revelation. He has been pleased to reveal Himself in the Scriptures with special reference to the salvation of man from sin; and the revelation of the Trinity is at once seen to have special interest in man's salvation.

It is not only to widen our mental horizon, to increase our knowledge of God, but it is specially to enlighten and enliven our souls in the experience of salvation in the full revelation of the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit. Our text sets forth the result. All mankind, divided before by the presence or absence of a special revelation into two great classes, are now to receive the revelation in Jesus Christ, and so both Jew and Gentile have access through Christ by the Spirit to the Father.

We are alienated from God, the Father, by our sins; we have arrayed His righteousness against our sins, and cannot in ourselves satisfy it; we have marred His image in our nature and we cannot restore it.

God the Father has given us His Son to save us from our sins. Jesus Christ our Divine Redeemer has satisfied the claims of righteousness against us, and by His righteousness has provided new life for us. God, the Holy Spirit, sent of the Father and the Son, teaches us the way of salvation and conforms us in faith and holy living to Christ. So we have access to the Father by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The creed leads us, as do the Scriptures, not to arrogance and pride and intolerance, but to humility, reverence and faith.

We are to learn as much as we can of the

nature of God; but we should always recognize that we can never fully comprehend Him. Our minds will be developed throughout eternity as we contemplate Him in His wonderful works, but we probably will never fully comprehend the mystery of His existence. He will ever lead us on in knowledge, in the development of all our powers, but He will always be in the lead. There will always be for us the honour of learning and the duty of reverence—the privilege of looking, of gazing and adoring.

The creed leads us, as do the Scriptures, to learn now of God, of His nature and His works, all we need for our full salvation; and this knowledge on sufficient evidence leads us to an insight of His character and to a trust in Him and obedience to Him which is our salvation. A mere intellectual acceptance of creed or Scripture will not suffice. We are to know, in order to love and trust and obey, the one only true and eternal God, the God of our salvation.

The Scripture declares, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Is not this creed enough? What the smallest quantity of knowledge of Jesus Christ may be enough to lead one to trust Him, we need not ask. Certainly the Scriptures present Him fully for our faith. Surely it is desirable we should know all that it is possible to know of Him, that we may be His intelligent followers, and may

rightly commend Him to others; and the more we know the more fully we should live in fellowship with Him. So we are incited by the creed, as we follow its articles, to a greater knowledge of the wonderful work of each of the three Persons of the Godhead in giving us salvation and so to the experience of the love of God in Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

III.

*Go unto my brethren and say to them,
I ascend unto my Father and your Father
and my God and your God.*—JOHN 20: 17.

“GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER
OF HEAVEN AND EARTH”

WE are wonderful beings; the more we contemplate ourselves the more the wonder grows. We are conscious of thinking, feeling, willing, that we are persons; we remember a long past, a personal past; we plan for an uncertain but hoped-for future—a personal future. Now we look out upon the earth and the sky, wonderful in themselves at the first thoughtful look, and the more steadily and intently we look the more the wonder grows.

The earth and the sky have had a long past; we read it, but it is not a personal past. The earth and sky, the more intently we look, have a wonderful order and arrangement, but they show no signs of intelligence, feeling, willing, that they are arranging themselves. The earth and sky have an uncertain future; the present evidently prepares for it, we may anticipate it,

but it is not a personal future. We persons are in wonderful union and dependence upon our impersonal surroundings. We find our bodies are made of the same stuff that earth and distant stars are made of, only we can think and feel and will, and they cannot.

The universe—one system, one history, one future—what a wonderful thing it is! We too are a part of it, one with it: only we have a wonderful personality, and we find nothing like this in the rest of the universe.

How did the universe, including ourselves, come to be—come into existence? How is it, including ourselves, maintained and governed in such splendid order? What will be its future, including ourselves? What wonderful questions, how hard to answer! And yet we must ask them, because we are persons. We would not be persons, would not be thinking, feeling, willing beings if we did not ask them. It is in our nature to ask them. Man as an intelligent person must ask these questions. Is there any answer? 'The Apostles' Creed replies: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

Does this reply commend itself to our reason? Other replies have been given. Men, as they have advanced from savagery through barbarism to some high degrees of civilization, have believed in many gods of varied and often con-

flicting characters: but an appreciation of the oneness of the system we call the universe has set aside such answers. Some have thought that the universe itself is God—that it accounts for itself—by chance, by materialism or by pantheism; but no consciousness of personality can be seen in it, outside ourselves, and we know we are not God in any sense. Some have said we can never find out the answer, we have no powers of knowing. We may not be able to know all about God, but the insistence of the question in our intelligent personality implies there will be found a reasonable answer. Some have said, 'There must be a God, the maker of all things, but He has no longer any interest in them, any control over them. This seems to be inconsistent with the needed intelligence of such a personal maker of the vast universe, including ourselves, persons.

Now as we look again carefully, intently at our surroundings, the universe outside ourselves, there is such a marvellous harmony and order in it, such a marvellous combination of forces and materials in one harmonious system, such stately order, such striking beauty, such marvellous usefulness in many directions that it begins to assume the nature of a message to us, to have a strange resemblance to a book that we are to learn to read and to follow.

This makes science possible. It investigates

the various departments of nature, classifies the facts it discovers, forms theories as to the means that have brought them about; in other words it tries to read the message, and to turn its knowledge into practical channels of usefulness. Scientists strive faithfully to find the truth in the message; all honour to such earnest searchers for truth; but some do not attend to the natural inference that a message comes from one mind to another, that a book implies an author as well as a reader. Other scientists adoringly acknowledge that they are simply trying to read the thoughts of God after Him, trying to read His message to them.

When we, as directed by the Apostles' Creed, turn to investigate the Scriptures we find they teach from beginning to end the existence of one "God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth."

The two books, that of nature and that of the Scriptures, speak to our questioning minds the same message: God exists, our Father. Sometimes these two readers, Science and Religion, have been intolerant of each other; this is not because the two books are in any sense conflicting—they come from one author—but because the readers have had but small knowledge, and each proud of the little knowledge he possessed was contemptuous of the little knowledge of the other.

The day of this conflict has almost passed away, very little of it remains, and it passes because the narrowness of knowledge is passing with its misunderstandings and errors.

Religion looks up into the blue sky on a clear day and says how beautiful God has made the heavens. Science says the sky is blue because the cosmic dust filling the air transmits all other rays and reflects only the blue rays of the sunlight, and thus she sees the way in which God has, through the ages, made the heavens beautiful.

Science was intolerant of the six days of creation described in the first chapter of Genesis because it thought the days were of twenty-four hours. Since it has learned that day in Scripture means a vast period—as the day of creation, the day of God's rest, the day of judgment, the day of grace, and since it has seen in that chapter the same vast succession of creative acts it is studying in astronomy, geology and biology narrated in the same order as it finds written in the heavens and the earth, intolerance has given place to adoration.

Religion was intolerant of the immense periods of unfolding changes in the earth as indicated in the stratification of the rocks and of the vast periods of the evolution of forms of life upon its surface. But we have learned that the farther back we go and the greater

the number of changes one takes in view the more a great deal does the mind observing these learn the far-reaching plans of the great maker of heaven and the earth.

Thus Religion and Science are sisters studying and admiring together the works of their heavenly Father. They look back through immense periods of time and see the cosmic light dawning from condensing star dust, as God said, “Let there be light.” They see this little globe of the earth forming into shape and the gases and water and land coming into proper proportions.

Dead matter being prepared for its dwelling place the command of God brings vegetable life into existence; this life did not come from the matter but from the great Life-Giver. After long succession of abundant vegetation the air was so cleared of gases that sun, moon and stars could be seen and that present day movements prevailed. Thus when the atmosphere was prepared animal life in water and air was introduced, not from dead matter, not from vegetable life even, but from the great Life-Giver. After long succession of many forms of life, some now extinct, but whose vestiges are found in the stratification of the earth, God created man—a race distinct from all other races of life, though related to them as from the dust of the earth, but having distinctively

the likeness, the image of the great Life-Giver.

Thus man comes into existence at length in the plan and work of God, man the person, the thinking, feeling, willing being who can thus read the book God has written. Thus Religion and Science vie with each other in studying the works and word of God and in adoring Him. Science is becoming more and more religious, and Religion is becoming more and more scientific. Man the wonderful person becomes more wonderful as he learns of and adores "God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth."

For there is also this feature of our nature as persons that we not only have to ask how the universe came into existence, a mere intellectual question perhaps, but we have feeling and will, and our whole nature craves another person, with whom we may have fellowship. As persons we are children of a great Father and the highest powers of our nature cannot be satisfied except as we find Him.

The revelation of God in the Scriptures awakens and satisfies this craving. The craving may lie dormant in the savage—it may stir as if about to awaken in the advance through barbarism to civilization, and men only become conscious of their brotherhood to each other as they dimly recognize God as their Father. When Jesus Christ, the full revelation of God,

comes in touch with the souls of men He gives them power to become the sons of God. He awakens fully the likeness of God in the soul, takes away all the barriers that separate the soul from God and we wonderful persons become more wonderful as we are inspired by our Saviour to think the thoughts, feel the feelings and choose the choices of God, and so have true fellowship with our Father in heaven.

Now not only has God made but He maintains and rules the heaven and the earth. The teaching of Christ is remarkable in that it brings God near to us, declares Him present and acting in all our surroundings and in our lives. In our limited use of language, dependent alone on our experience, we have made use of two words—Creation and Providence. We are makers of things and we speak of God as the maker of all things. But why do we make things? to throw them aside? Alas, yes, too often, as we are ignorant and trifling and often failures. But generally we make things for purposes we choose. We foresee, we provide for the future, we have a plan and end in view. Now with reference to the universe, including ourselves, we are certain, since in order to make such a universe God must be all powerful, all wise, and all good. He did not make it to throw it aside—He had a plan and end in view. He is the God of creation and of Providence. We

persons look upon ourselves and upon our surroundings and read the thought, the feeling and the will of God not only in what He has done but in what He is doing now, and in what He will do in the future. God has a grand design, an end in view with reference to the great universe; this includes of course many particular ends tending towards it, and He employs means to accomplish the particular and the general ends, and in all He is infinitely powerful, wise and good.

We call this the Providence of God, the maintaining and governing the universe to attain the designed end.

And now as we look again and more intently at our surroundings and upon ourselves there arise at least three questions that greatly perplex us. Of course we can silence them by saying that we cannot hope to find the full answer to them in this stage of our existence, nor until God's plan is fully accomplished and the end He designed for the universe is at length realized and clearly seen by us. But we cannot think that God would have us thus stifle our questions; rather we feel He may be culturing our powers of thinking and our faith in Him by our trying to find some satisfactory answers to them.

The first question is, Does God's providence extend to the general outlines and to the great

results only, or does it include the small and subordinate things and persons as well? Is it only a universal or is it a particular Providence as well?

When we think of our own plans we recognize that unless due attention is paid to the small details the general plan is apt to fail. But in the universe there are so many apparently insignificant things. The spheres of existence in the heavens above us revealed by the telescope, the spectroscope, stellar photography in systems and galaxies of distant suns—all move in complete order and harmony. Surely the providence of God maintains and governs the heavens above us. Now we look within and beneath our own being and the microscope reveals spheres of existence of the infinitely small. God maintains and governs the stars—does He maintain and govern microbes and insects invisible to the naked eye as well? Now we reflect still further and see that atoms and force and law, the little as well as the great, are in the stars as well as in the insects. The great and the small are inseparably linked together. Nothing is too great for His control. Nothing is too small for His notice. And we begin to see that Jesus Christ stated a scientific truth when He said, “Not a sparrow falls on the ground without your Father; the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”

When we look upon the history of the race of man we see the vast influence of the seemingly insignificant upon great movements. The wave of the hand of a savage sends the great discoverer to the south and Spanish civilization takes possession of South America, while North America is given to the Anglo-Saxon. The nod of the head of an ignorant peasant led Napoleon to order the charge which defeated him at Waterloo.

We turn to the Scriptures and the fate of Joseph is decided by a passing caravan going down into Egypt. Later on, David hides from Saul in the depths of a cave. Saul and his men, pursuing and wearied, come to the cave and fall asleep in the cool entrance. David and his men, watchful, pass out over their sleeping foes. The caravan happens to pass and events follow, leading up to the giving of the Ten Commandments on Sinai. Saul falls asleep and events follow, leading to the great Son of David, the Cross and the Resurrection. No individual or event is isolated or neglected. However small, we are under the care of God. Every thoughtful man must recognize in his individual life that great changes are wrought by small events, and that beyond his care there is One who cares for him. The belief in providence should lead each one of us to at least thank God every morning that we were born in a Christian land.

Now the second question arises, Does not God maintain and govern the universe by law, and so is not all His care of the little and the great confined to the working of universal law, and so can there be any feature of what we call personal care of either single events or of individual lives?

We who are trying to think the thoughts of God after Him must be filled with astonishment at the universal sway of law. We who are trying to feel and will like God must recognize at once that our part is to discover and obey His law. We recognize that God's laws are for the good of His creatures and that their well-being can only be secured by their obedience to them. So we try to obey the law of gravitation as we walk, the law of breathing as we seek pure air, the law of digestion as we eat wholesome food, and so all the laws of health of body, mind and soul, as we discover them.

In these laws for our good God has a personal care for each one of us. Just as one of you who is a father may make general rules for and exercise a general oversight of your family and still have a deep personal care of each of your children.

But while we are limited on our part to honour law by seeking to learn and obey it, we are not to limit God to His laws as we understand them. We even, as we are on the outside

of law and so limited to discovery and obedience, may work our special will in many an instance by combination and arrangement. We combine the law of gravitation and the law of the expansion of steam and by constructing machinery to run on rails we send the heavy train of cars from city to city, carrying many passengers in comfort and safety. God knows more laws than we do and can combine their infinite complexity. And He acts from the inside of nature while we act only from the outside. And so it is at least conceivable that without setting aside or breaking a single law He may work His personal care over particular events and individual lives.

The only question then is, Will He so act? If this is involved in His promise to answer prayer in some special case, or if it is involved in His promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," in some special case we may be sure He will so act.

The last of the three perplexing questions now demands our notice. Why does God permit sin in His maintaining and governing the universe? We can only say now that the remaining articles of the creed will throw great light upon that question as we consider all He does to overrule and save from sin. He has made us free moral beings. We have chosen to break moral laws; it was permitted in the very

nature of our freedom. God governs us as free moral agents. He uses His providence, as we can easily see, to punish, to check, to prevent sin in many forms and courses. We sinners are still under the government of the holy God; we have not passed beyond His care. His dealings with us become a strong appeal to us to turn from sin. So through His providence has come to us the gift of His Son, to be our Redeemer, our Saviour from sin.

Trusting in Him we may have the utmost confidence that He will provide all things necessary for soul and body and that He will overrule all evil for our good. He is able, He is willing, He is faithful, for He is our loving Father in Christ, as He is the Almighty Father of Jesus Christ our Lord.

IV.

Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.—MATT. 1: 21; 16: 16.

“JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON,
OUR LORD”

SIX of the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed are devoted to Jesus Christ and His works. This first article mentions His name, calls Him the only begotten Son of God, the Father, and acknowledges Him as our Lord.

Names are given men to distinguish one from another; it is hard to distinguish the absent in any other way. In early ages what we now call the first or given name was generally used and frequently combined with the father's first name or that of the place of residence. So we read of Jesus, the son of Joseph, or of Jesus of Nazareth. It is interesting to trace the origin of family names, as we call them. Most were probably given originally by general consent as descriptive of personal appear-

ance, character or employment, as for instance Tallman, Strong or Smith. These are often absurdly unsuitable to those who bear them now. Besides, names of honour are sometimes conferred upon men descriptive of character and achievement. In some such way Jesus of Nazareth came to be called the Christ—or Jesus Christ, as we now recognize Him. This name distinguishes Him from all other men who have ever lived.

There is deep significance in each one of these names. Joseph was told by the angel of the Lord to call Mary's son Jesus, and this meaning of the name was given—"for he shall save his people from their sins." When more than half of the ministry of Jesus was accomplished He asked His disciples the result. "Whom do you say that I am?" and Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Christ means anointed. Thou art the anointed Son of God. This human giving of a name was accepted by Jesus.

We are now to consider the deep significance of the full name Jesus Christ. The first name Jesus, the divinely given name, signifies what He does; the second name, Christ, the humanly given name, signifies how He does it—the manner in which He accomplishes His mission.

Jesus is, I suppose, the dearest name ever uttered by human lips. It was the name Mary

the mother used in speaking to and of her son, the mother name always dear, and to her wondering and adoring heart specially dear. So it is the heart name of the believer in all ages; his lips quiver with emotion, his eyes fill with tears as he speaks the name of his Saviour. To the believer there is no music on earth nor in the songs of heaven like the name of Jesus. It will be a joy to us to meditate upon its full significance and so to be drawn nearer to Him who is our Saviour.

The angel of the Lord said, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." Now we are His people, for we trust Him. Then He saves us from our sins. And all conscious of sin are invited to His full salvation. For it is this loving and all powerful Jesus who says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." These are surely the most tender and loving words ever spoken by human lips. Sinners are those who transgress the law of God in thought or word or deed. The law is that of our being. Love God who has given us our being and all good things, and who is infinitely lovely in His nature, love Him supremely, and your fellow man as yourself. Looking at ourselves in the light of this law we must acknowledge in our consciences that we are sinners. Now at once we are prone to turn

our thought from sin itself to its consequences. Will we be discovered? Will we be held to strict account?

We recognize that evil, suffering, often come to us from transgressing some law without us or within us, some broken limb from a fall, some severe pain from unwholesome food, and looking further we see also that suffering comes from defeated selfishness and from the contests working harm to others though successful for ourselves; and suffering is fearfully prevalent in this world since sin is so prevalent. Thus as we reflect the dire results of sin loom before us in terrifying form; and further terror is awakened as we think of their dominating the future life.

Now it is to be noticed that nothing is said by the angel—nothing is said in this divinely given name of saving us from the consequences of our sins either in time or eternity. It goes much deeper than that—“he saves us from our sins”—that is, from sin itself. It is not the primary object of Jesus to save from what we call evil, from suffering, from hardship. In the process of saving from sin He does save us largely from evil as the consequence of sin, but that is only incidental to the larger saving from sin. In proportion as a life of virtue, of love to God and man is reached it is a life of happiness, though it may be in the midst of suffering. Virtue is its own source of happiness, its own

reward. Outward evil loses much of its power. Songs burst forth from hovels, from sick beds, even from prisons and martyr flames.

Then too the nature of evil is changed to the soul believing in Jesus and being saved from sin. It is no longer in the line of punishment; that sting is taken away as we shall soon see, but it becomes disciplinary. It still may be very heavy and hard to bear but it is being administered by the loving Father, by Jesus the Saviour, in saving us from sin. So earthly fathers, earthly teachers give tasks, give hard work to their children to develop strength and steadfastness; they are often mistaken in their discipline, but Jesus is too wise and loving to make any mistakes. We have utmost cause to trust Him fully to the end.

Neither is it the primary object of Jesus to save from the eternal punishment of sin. He does this of course but it is incidental to saving us from sin. There is suffering in hell, the place of punishment, because there is sin there, and as long as there is sin there, there will be suffering. There is no suffering in heaven, "no sorrow, no crying, neither any pain," because there is no sin there. Jesus, Jesus, the dearest name on human lips—He saves His people from their sins. It is vitally important for us all to understand this fully. If any of us are ever thinking of putting off trusting in Jesus to the end

of this life, to our dying beds, we have wholly mistaken His mission; we are thinking not of sin but of its consequences; we want to be saved not from sin but from its punishment. Then, too, if any think of trusting any other, as saints, or saintly friends or our own selves, it must be to save from the punishment of sin and so it is at once seen to be vain. Let us all rather now, at once in this our time of need and of opportunity, trust in Jesus to save us from our sins.

We now turn to the second name Christ to seek more fully to understand how He saves us from sin. Christ is the Greek name which translates the Hebrew name Messiah. Both names mean anointed. In Hebrew life there were three offices to which men were anointed as prophets, priests and kings. The anointing consisted of pouring oil upon the head and signified that God set apart and consecrated the man to the discharge of the duties of the office. Thus Aaron was anointed as Priest, thus David was anointed as King, thus Elisha was anointed as Prophet. Aaron, David, Elisha, great men—and other great men followed them. Now the whole account given of these prophets, priests and kings through succeeding generations in the long history shows the people were led to look for the coming of a greater Prophet, Priest and King in one person. Hence the great expectation of the Messiah was awakened

among the Jews. Generations passed away, and then Jesus began His ministry. After a suitable time of ministry He asked His disciples, "Whom do you say that I am?" We cannot imagine the awe with which the answer was given, "Thou art the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God." Those giving this answer believed the hopes of the Hebrew race growing through their long history were at length fully realized in Him.

Now if we look carefully at the history of the whole race of mankind we see the stirrings of dormant and vague hopes which are made fully alive and satisfied in the Messiah of the Hebrews, the Christ of the world. For as the race rises from savage conditions towards civilization the presence and influence of these three offices, prophets, priests and kings, must be recognized. And as we look at our own needs even in our high civilization we recognize that Jesus can be our Saviour from our sins only as He is our Prophet, Priest and King.

Man wherever found is ignorant, but capable of learning. He needs a teacher. Among all races men of special taste and ability have arisen who have become teachers of their fellows. Some in some races have made great attainments and have led their people to great knowledge—the wise men of the east, the sages of Egypt, the philosophers of Greece. Many have

been enthusiastic seekers of truth, have made great discoveries in various lines and have conferred great benefit upon their fellows. Whatever truths these great teachers have taught have been their readings of God's great book of nature, have been of their seeking after God's thoughts.

When we come to the Hebrew race their great teachers from Moses, the great prophet and lawgiver, down to the last prophet of the noble line were specially gifted in seeing the truths of nature as revealing God and were specially anointed by the spirit of God for larger vision of Him in His character and works.

Now the glory of all the teachers, the prophets of all ages and all races comes from Christ, and centers in Him. He stands at the head. He is the great Prophet, the Messiah of God. Scientists tell us that all the light upon the earth comes from the sun. When we light our fires of wood or coal, when we light our evening lamps of oil or gas or electricity we are using that which the sun has compounded and stored up for us ages ago. So all our discoveries of truth, the incentive, the attainment, the truth itself comes from the great Teacher; and in all and beyond all we have from the great teachers of earth are the teachings of the great Prophet Himself.

He has made clear certain truths of which our

greatest teachers had but dim knowledge, as the character of God.

He has brought to full light certain truths of which our greatest teachers could only conjecture, as man's immortality.

He has revealed certain truths of which our greatest teachers were entirely ignorant, the great plan of God for our salvation from sin.

Looking again at the history of the race, man wherever found is a religious being and also he is conscious of sinfulness. As man emerges from the unknown past we see the tribe gathered for worship, and there is an altar, a sacrifice and a priest. They recognize that they need some one to approach God for them; they are so sinful that they must have a priest, a sacrifice and an altar. What does it mean? There is a strong desire to approach God. There is an instinctive feeling we are not worthy to approach Him. He will repel us. There is the reasonable plan. We will set apart a priest to approach God for us by offering sacrifice to Him. Perhaps God will accept us through the priest and the sacrifice.

This instinctive feeling was used by God in directing the worship of the Hebrews. He taught them of His holiness and of their sinfulness and provided for them a way in which they could confess their sin and satisfy for it and become devoted to God. They were to

stand at a distance from His tabernacle, they were to confess their sins upon the head of the sacrifice, they were to offer the life to God, His life for their life, and in the burnt offering was signified their entire devotion to God. Now while they stood at a distance a priest approached God for them, offered their sacrifice for them, interceded for them and returning to them gave them God's blessing.

The glory of Christ, the anointed Priest, is seen that He stands at the head of the priests of all races and ages—at the head of the priests of the Hebrew race—and that which was only signified in them is fulfilled in Him. His whole life was one of self-sacrifice in love for us but especially as our Priest He sacrificed Himself upon the cross, making atonement for our sins in that He bore in His suffering and death all our desert, and won for us the favour of God which is life everlasting.

Now as we look again at the dim ranks of men emerging from an unknown past we see they have a leader. He is the chieftain of the tribe, its head; it becomes a nation, the head; the chieftain becomes a king. In him government centers, for the order of the tribe or nation and for its defense. Even in our republic we have a Governor or President.

We do not, we cannot approve of all prophets and their teachings—much of error mingles

with truth—nor of all priests—much of superstition mingles with religious feeling—nor of all kings—much tyranny mingles with government, but we recognize the influence of kings, of government in the advance of the race.

So the glory of Christ is seen in that He stands at the head of all kings; of all government of man, the social being. He is the anointed King of the race.

Now as we look intently at Christ alone the anointed Prophet, Priest and King, we begin to see the depth and height of meaning of that phrase of this article of the creed, “his only son”—the only begotten Son of God the Father. The next article of the creed will shed fuller light upon this truth—now we see its full bearing on the name Christ.

Christ is the Prophet; as the anointed, “the only begotten son of God,” He not only teaches of God, He shows God to us, reveals God in His nature and character; He says, “whoso has seen me has seen the Father.”

Christ is the Priest; as the anointed, “the only begotten son of God,” His sufferings and death have infinite value. No mere man, however innocent, however righteous, could have atoned for the sin of man; only the Divine Man could bear our curse, could have purchased life eternal for us.

Christ is the King; as the anointed, “the only

begotten son of God,” He is good enough, great enough and has the right to rule over our thoughts, our desires, our whole lives as social beings; He is the Divine King.

Now we turn again to our confession, I believe in Jesus Christ. I have faith in Him on sufficient evidence that He lived and died and arose again as recorded in the Scriptures. I have insight in Him, recognizing certain qualities of highest worth. I trust in Him to do for me all I need, to save me from sin. I have Him as my sole principle of action. I can say with the creed, “He is my Lord.” So I partake of His anointing I am a Christian. I will teach of Jesus Christ, my Prophet. I will give myself a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Him, my Priest. I will fight the good fight of faith under Him, my King, relying on His care, doing His will, honouring Him in all things.

So we ask all to join with us in this article of the creed, to learn of Christ the Teacher, to trust in Christ the Priest, to obey Christ the King, to learn of, to trust, to obey Jesus as He saves His people from their sins.

V.

For when the fullness of time came God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law.—GAL. 4:4.

“CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST,
BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY”

JESUS CHRIST lived in Judea nineteen centuries ago. His life is pictured for us in the four Gospels. Those who knew Him best believed He was more than a man. The Apostles' Creed in the second article and especially in this third article voices the belief of the Church in all ages. It says the only begotten Son of God was “conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.” This conception and birth are described in the early chapters of Matthew's and Luke's Gospels. This sets Him forth as the most remarkable being who has ever lived upon the earth, and forms good ground to believe that He now lives at the right hand of God in heaven. He is the God incarnate, the Man Divine. In our text the Apostle Paul says that the Son of God assumed our human nature in carrying out the plan of

God of man's redemption. This stupendous theme should widen our views and inflame our hearts with the love of Jesus Christ.

In the works of God we can discern no trace of either haste or delay; His plans are conceived in wisdom and executed with power; they are carried on from the beginning with no need of correction, with no change of method. Science reading the book of nature and Religion reading the book of revelation in the first chapter of Genesis see God forming the globe of the earth, though many geologic convulsions and long periods of time are in its vast surroundings. When dead matter was fully prepared God bestowed a new gift directly from Himself, the lower kind of life. When the fullness of time was come God again interposed a new gift from Himself, a higher kind of life. Again through long ages when the fullness of time was come God again touched the earth with the highest kind of created life, the likeness to Himself. Again through long ages when the fullness of time was come God gave from Himself the highest kind of uncreated life, even His only begotten Son, “conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.”

The earth was already old, the race of man had passed through vast experiences when Jesus Christ was born. As dead matter could not bring forth even the lowest life—as the

lowest life could not bloom into the highest life—as the higher life could not develop the man life, so man, who in the exercise of his moral freedom had chosen disobedience to God, fallen man could not raise himself or satisfy himself away from God. Then in the fullness of time God sent His own Son, the desire of all nations, who became the God-Man, Jesus Christ, the anointed Saviour.

The key-note to all the prior history of the race is preparation for Christ's coming. The earliest civilizations were in the Euphrates and Nile valleys; the race won vast material prosperity from these fertile bottom lands. But neither Egypt nor Babylon could save man from luxury and vice, from his sins.

In ancient Greece man developed his intellectual powers and his sense of the beautiful. But learning and culture could not save man from pride and sensuality, from his sins. In ancient Rome man won the empire of the world by the domination of his will. But government and power could not save man from selfishness and cruelty, from his sins. In Judea, the central land, the bridge between these great civilizations, man gained the knowledge of the true God and of righteousness. But even this knowledge could not save him from formality and intolerance, from his sins.

While material prosperity, intellectual de-

velopment, social order and formal religion in the worship of the true God could not save man from sin, they had worth in themselves and prepared the way for Christ not only in their failure but in their service. Eastern contemplation was combined with western energy. Greek power took possession of the East, and gave for three centuries its rich inheritance of language and energy to Babylon, Judea and Egypt. Then came Roman conquest and gave its laws and government to the world. Thus Greek culture and Roman order made possible the founding and spread of a world religion in Jesus Christ.

The age in which Christ lived was an historical one. It was the Augustan age of Rome. Statesmen, orators, historians, writers made it splendid—as was the Victorian Age in England long afterwards. The Greek age of achievement in intellectual effort was past; its philosophers and poets were the world's inheritance in its rich language. Judea had given the world rich inheritance of righteousness in her long literature of the deeds of lawgivers and kings, in the aspirations of poets and prophets.

Back of the age in which Christ lived stretched a thousand years of Hebrew history with that of Egypt and Babylon. Seven hundred years of Greek history, five hundred years of Roman history. Over the land of Judea had

flowed the Chaldean, the Greek and the Roman power and civilization, leaving the deposit of three languages spoken in Christ's time and by Christ and His disciples—the Hebrew, the Greek and the Latin—a cultured land in that cultured age. It was not the age of myths, or in which myths could arise and grow; that age lay far back in the dim past. For all future ages the events in the life of Christ would be beyond the suspicion of myths, would be clearly seen as historical. From His life came the four masterly descriptions of it we have in the Gospels. They are clear, beautiful, striking pictures of Him—like photographs.

Now as we look upon this life passed in the clear light of an enlightened, intelligent, historical age, upon which the strong light of historical investigation has ever since been shining, we see a most remarkable thing. This Jesus Christ loved God supremely, delighted to do His will. He loved man, always used His thought and power for the good of His fellow man. He so loved man that He died for him. We cannot find a flaw in His life as compared with the law of man's being as given by God. More we are confirmed in this in that His closest, best friends who knew Him most intimately found no sin in Him. So also His enemies, and He had sharp and unscrupulous ones, could find no flaw in Him. Then besides

all this there seems to be no consciousness of sin in Him. Surely He is the best of all possible witnesses of His own nature. We ask Him, Who art thou? Hear His answer. He tells Nicodemus, “No man hath ascended into heaven but he that descended out of heaven, the son of man.” When He walked upon the waters of the sea of Galilee and saved Peter from its depths the disciples worshipped Him, saying, “Of a truth thou art the son of God.” When the High Priest, acting as the chief judge of the highest court of his nation, put Jesus under oath and asked Him, “Art thou the Christ, the Son of God?” Jesus answered, “I am.”

Between the creator and the creature there is a great distinction. The more perfect and intelligent the man, the moral creature, is, the more clear will be his recognition of this distinction. The claim of Jesus Christ thus becomes astounding. No mere man could make it. There is no way of explaining it away consistent with the character of Christ. It must simply be accepted. These are only a few of His teachings on the nature of His being—many others could be selected. Look again at them: and the Church’s creed is the only answer.

How did the Son of Man descend from heaven? Not attended by the hosts of angels,

not with the glory of God. This earth has not yet received such a visit from its great Creator. He became incarnate, assumed human nature. He "was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." The man walks the waves of the sea, and receives the worship of His fellows as the Son of God. The man stands before the Sanhedrim, and under oath says He is the Son of God, and the court sends Him to the cross. The Son of God was the son of Mary.

This is confirmed by Jesus Christ's place in the Bible. He is the harmony of its teachings. He is the center, the culmination of the whole. Take away the Divinity of Christ from the Bible and it loses its completeness. The syllogism is convincing. He to whom the names, attributes, works and honours of God are ascribed must be God. These all, in the Old Testament of history, ceremony, praise and prophecy, and in the New Testament of Gospels, Acts and Epistles, are ascribed to Christ. Therefore He is the Son of God, "conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

This is confirmed by Christ's place in the history of the race. We have already glanced at this history before His coming to the earth nineteen centuries ago. Now His religion has spread over the earth. He is its distinctive feature—the Divine Saviour. Other religions have the one God, as the Jew and the Mo-

hammedan. Other religions have a code of morals, as Buddha and Confucius. Other religions have the missionary spirit, as Buddha and Mohammedan. But the distinctive truth of the Christian religion is Jesus, the Saviour from sin; the Christ, the anointed Prophet, Priest and King; the Son of God, “conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary”; the God incarnate, the Man Divine, the Saviour of sinners. This gives Him the first place in the life and heart of the believer. The conscience is at peace, the soul is satisfied, the life is purified. The devotion of Christ is everywhere and in all ages the noblest attainment of man.

The truth is of vast importance to each one personally. Jesus is the Son of God. Do I ignore His claim or resist it? Then I resist God, and I resist Him in His love, in His effort to save me from my sins. Rather I trust Him and adore Him as my Saviour.

We are utterly unable to understand how the two natures, divine and human, are united in one person. The seeming contradictions spoken of Christ fill us with awe, and are beyond our understanding. The wearied Saviour is asleep in a frail boat in a great storm on the sea. The disciples in fear awake Him, and He commands the winds and the waves and there is a great calm. The Jews say, “Thou art not yet fifty years old,” and they were right. Christ replies,

"Before Abraham was I am," and He knew and spoke the truth. We cannot understand our own personality, how the physical and mental are combined in one person; but these existed in Christ as well as in us; and so this mystery fails to help us in the more mysterious union of the two natures in Him, except as making us humble in estimating the scope and power of our understanding. Christ too is said to dwell in us, "the hope of glory," but this indwelling is by His spirit through our faith and it does not combine our nature with His in the matter of making of the two one person. The union is close, is vital, is glorious and it too is beyond our weak power of understanding; we are simply conscious of our individuality, our personality, by itself.

Jesus Christ is just as truly human as He is divine. As we received our existence by birth so He received His; He was born of the Virgin Mary. Inexpressibly great is the honour thus placed upon motherhood. The hopes and fears, the trials and joys which dwell in a mother's heart stirred the heart of Mary as she looked forward to the birth of her son Jesus. Mother is the dearest, sweetest name on human lips, more dear now since Jesus our Saviour often had it upon His sacred lips, through life and at last upon the cross.

There is a great significance in the term, the

Son of Man. Jesus frequently called Himself the Son of Man. Ezekiel is the only one who used that term freely of himself, and he does this in his humility, to cheer the depression of his people in their captivity. There seems a different tone in Christ's use of the term; something like the insistence that He is a man—a full man, a complete man. He is the one person in the Scriptures who claims in the real sense to be Divine, the Son of God. In His favourite term the Son of Man, He magnifies that claim by insisting that He is a true man. If we think of any other Bible character insisting that he is a man, for example John or Paul, we see how absurd it would be. We would answer at once, “Who ever dreamed you were anything else?” It is appropriate upon the lips of only one being, Jesus Christ. While I am the Son of God I am also a true man, the Son of Man.

This draws our attention to His full humanity. In Him humanity is for once fully manifested. Other men are fragments. Jesus Christ is the whole man. Other men are fragments. Each may have many manly qualities but not all; each quality may be nearly perfect, but not fully. No quality is fully rounded; no man has all such qualities complete. Each great division of the race may excel in some manly qualities and be deficient in others. Now Jesus Christ has all excellencies of manhood.

He is the perfect man, the fully rounded, complete man, the best, the whole human nature, no excellency left out, or in any sense deficient. He is the Son of Man. So He satisfies the ideals of all ages and of all races, and supplements them as well—appeals both to their excellencies and to their defects.

The men of the East are contemplative. Jesus appeals to the oriental in His contemplation.

We men of the West are active. Jesus is more active than even the occident demands.

The men of ancient times made great achievements, but we have to make excuses for even Socrates and Marcus Aurelius arising from the age in which they lived. No such excuses are needed for Jesus Christ.

The men of modern times have made great attainments in thought and life, but Jesus stands still far ahead of even our ideals; He is the Son of Man. Many national traits are so marked that we may often describe a race or a nation in one word. That word if well chosen will describe Christ, but not fully; it will take many such national traits and still others to set forth the ideal man. He has the love of righteousness of the Jew, the love of beauty of the Greek, the love of power of the Roman. So with our modern nations. He has the rugged strength of the English, the perseverance of the German,

the genius of the Italian, the brilliancy of the French, the energy of the American. Jesus Christ does not belong to any one nation or race, He belongs to all. He is a citizen of the world, the Son of Man.

In the sphere of humanity there are two hemispheres. The one we call man, the other we call woman. Jesus Christ has all true manliness. In Him are the manly virtues: stern iron integrity, as in the temptation; justice never giving way to weak feeling, as rebuking His disciples; severe truthfulness in speaking plainly to friend and foe; righteous indignation, as denouncing the Pharisees; calm courage facing angry mobs; steady self-sacrifice, not in the excitement of the hour alone, but in the long and steady advance to the cross. He is every inch a man. Just as markedly He has all the womanly virtues: purity without a shadow of an evil thought; tender consideration for the ignorant; compassion for the sorrowing; sympathy for the suffering; patient endurance of wrong; gentleness, as a woman's touch; love beyond a mother's. He is the complete sphere of humanity, the Son of Man.

In His day as in ours the race of man was divided into two great classes—the rich and the poor. To-day we call them the capitalist class and the labouring class. And there is not only division but often conflict between them.

Jesus was a poor man; in the latter part of His ministry He had not where to lay His head. Up until the time of His ministry He was a labouring man—in boyhood in the humble home, in young manhood a carpenter at His bench earning His living by daily toil. Industry, frugality were prominent in His life. The welfare of labour was His welfare when on earth, and we may be sure it is dear to Him now. The great multitude of His followers in all ages and now belong to the labouring class. But He is not a part man—He is the whole man, the Son of Man. No man was too rich to be His brother, though a millionaire. He went to the houses of the rich in full sympathy with all their needs. He cured their sick, He faithfully rebuked their errors, He instructed them as others. More than all, He tried to teach them the meaning of their wealth, that they were the stewards of God, they were to gain wealth by honest and fair dealings, and should use their riches only in obedience to His will, and that the poor were their brothers. He is the Son of Man—He appeals to both labour and capital by His full manhood, treating them as His brothers and influencing them to seek each the other's good. When capital says to its brother, We will give fair wages, we will take fair interest for the money invested, and we will share with you the remaining profits of your labour

and our money ; when labour says to its brother, We will seek your interests in our work, we will be diligent, skillful and faithful ; when each shall seek the profits of the other as he seeks his own, then there will be coöperation instead of conflict under the spirit and influence of the Son of Man. His influence as Son of Man in this as in all respects, in this relation as in all relations, is made commanding by His being as well the Son of God.

His work as Saviour, the way He saves, is fully treated in the following articles of the creed. We can easily see in this article some of the meaning of the Scripture in calling Him the only mediator between God and man. One who mediates must have the nature of both the estranged parties. So Christ represents God to us. We are sinners. God in His righteousness cannot approve and favour us as sinners. Now if He was revealed as stern, relentless, heartless, as condemning us and cold and indifferent to us, having no pity, no sympathy for suffering, sinful man, we could never be led to love Him. All the terrors of the law could not force love. You cannot drive with whips and brushes a swarm of bees into a field where there are no flowers, nor can you keep them out of a field full of flowers with all your whips and brushes. But God is not revealed as stern, relentless justice alone ; He is just, but also loving. “ God

so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life." He gave His Son in love to die for us; He reveals His infinite yearning love for us by the gift of His Son. Hard indeed must be the heart that will not love Him in return.

So Christ is our representative to God. Man, the very best of us, recognizes the rightfulness of the law of our being; and then disobeys it. The divine spark is not blown entirely out; it flames up and then sinks down again. We admire virtue till the call comes to practice it. We hate sin, until the temptation comes to indulge it. We have moral convictions but too often are unfaithful to them. We admire the good but fall into the evil. Then the Son of God becomes the Son of Man. He stands as our representative before God, a man as He ought to be, the ideal man fully realized.

God now looks with favour upon us as represented by the perfect man, the Son of Man.

We now look with love upon God as represented by the Son of God.

Jesus Christ is my Lord of greatest victory over sin, of greatest glory, that of love. I will rely upon His righteousness, depend upon His strength, follow His example.

VI.

This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.—MATT. 26:28.

“SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE,
WAS CRUCIFIED DEAD AND BURIED;
HE DESCENDED INTO HELL”

OUR Saviour Jesus Christ is at once the Son of God and the Son of Man. We are not able to fully fathom either title. All of divinity is in the one. All of humanity is in the other. All of humanity as God designed and created it, free from sin. He, the ideal man, enjoyed the fellowship with men in their homes, at their feasts, by the wayside, in their synagogues. He had deep sympathy for the distressed and wrought many wonderful works for their help. He had great love for all mankind, and wonderful love for His friends; He loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead, and He awakened great love in many for Himself.

This wonderful Person, the Son of God and the Son of Man, lived upon the earth for thirty

years in the bright light of an historical age. His life has been more studied in all succeeding ages than that of any other historical character. We know more about Him, His actions, His thoughts and feelings than we do of any other man who ever lived.

We ask what was the prevailing feature that characterized His life. We say at once suffering. How did this wonderful person leave this earth? He died a shameful death.

Our article of the Apostles' Creed now demands our careful attention. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified dead and buried. He descended into hell. His suffering culminated in His trial and death.

There is an immense amount of human suffering from which Christ was absolutely free, except through His compassion. Much of our suffering comes from being out of harmony with our surroundings, from broken natural laws, from being out of harmony within, from conflicting passions, from broken moral laws.

There is no hint of Christ ever being sick or suffering pain from His own act. He was evidently a man in perfect health. So there is no hint of His having any sorrow or dissatisfaction from not being good or not doing good. Through all His suffering there was a deep underlying delight in doing the will of God.

Now consider one or two features beneath

this surface. We probably all know instances where men and women leave homes of plenty and refinement to dwell in the slums of a great city or in heathen lands for the purpose of sympathy and help. They have the spirit of Christ and follow His example. They retain their purity, they have the joy of doing good, still there is great self-denial and suffering from contact with the impure, and from sympathy with their sufferings; and the closer the tie of brotherhood the greater the suffering. So Christ left the purity of heaven for the sinfulness of earth. His pure soul suffered the contact with sinful beings whom He loved. He dwelt in close ties with them and always had the most tender sympathy for their great suffering. So sometimes one of us devotes himself to save men from an enthroned and awful wrong, appeals to them to arouse and cast it off. He is a reformer, pure in motive, earnest in life; he too has the spirit of Christ and follows His example. Often he suffers as Christ suffered from being misunderstood, misrepresented, resisted, even hated by the men he desires to save. Often he suffers as Christ suffered from being misunderstood by his friends and followers, from the half-heartedness of many followers, from being deserted by those he had the right to rely upon in times of trial, distress and danger.

These two kinds of suffering of the infinitely pure and loving Christ were endured by Him all through His life. They increased in intensity as His ministry advanced and they culminated in His death upon the cross. We can only faintly imagine them; our purity is itself tinged with the vice from which it revolts. Our love for others has some pride of self-love in it, awakened by their opposition.

Another element of His suffering lies in His foreseeing His death throughout His ministry and in His dread of it. There are foreshadowings of His death in His early teachings and He very plainly taught of its coming and its meaning in the last year of His life. He clearly foreknew it and as steadily advanced towards it. So He foreknew its dreadful nature, the rejection by His people, the death of agony and shame upon the cross. He had the suffering of long anticipation, and bore it nobly, advancing step by step towards it. He was the Son of Man, full humanity was in Him, and so the natural love of life must have been strong in His fullness of life. Fullness of life was in Him and so a revulsion from the fate of being cast out by His fellow men as unworthy to live must have been strong in Him. He was a young man, in the splendid vigour of the prime of life, and the love of life must have been strong in Him. Still all these reasons and more besides

are needed to explain to us His dread of His coming death. We see it in several sayings of our Lord, but it comes out strongly in His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: “My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass away from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Many a young hero has advanced to his death in the excitement of the hour of trial. Now after the long advance through the years and the hour is here, does our Lord shrink from death?

Surely there was an element of suffering in His coming death which we have not yet grasped which was the cause of His dread of it, which was present whenever He thought of His death, and which grew in intensity as He came near to it. All the suffering we have thus far seen and much of the suffering of His last days came from His fellow men; in this and beyond this there seems a great realm of mystery to us but very real and clear to Him, the suffering that came upon Him directly from God. As we now consider the suffering He endured from men we see our depth of sinfulness as we are related to those who crucified Him, and we see also something of His deep suffering in His close relation as Son of Man to those who sent Him ignominiously out of this life. He felt the depth of sinfulness in those He came to save; and He still loved them and prayed for them—

“Father, forgive them, they know not what they do”—as He died for them upon the cross.

We often say the people, the mass of men embracing all classes, have deep down in their nature the admiration of the right; they will instinctively choose the right when left to act spontaneously. But the crowd, the mass of the people, of His own nationality, many of whom had doubtlessly been greatly blessed by Him, turned against Him in the crisis and with loud cries, without a dissenting voice, demanded of Pilate that He should be crucified. But they were influenced by their leaders, we say in excusing them. These leaders were the best men of their race; their leadership arose from their religious life and from their patriotism. These had for a long time opposed Christ, and now they who by rights ought to have received and been loyal to Him demanded in bitter hatred that He should be crucified.

There was an organized system of government. We think of society as so organized for its protection from evilly disposed members and from outside enemies and as expressing its highest ideals of social well-being. This government had a long history, so expressing the ideals of successive generations, and it culminated in a supreme court composed of the most just and eminent men of the nation.

Our Lord stands before this supreme court

and it sentences Him to death. Who can imagine the suffering of one sentenced by the highest court to death—and particularly if he is innocent of all desert of death, and instead deserves the highest commendation of the court?

But there is a higher government still—Rome, a world empire, noted for its laws and its fearless administration of justice. It is centered in a person, Pontius Pilate.

The Roman judge feels Christ is innocent of all desert of death, but from personal ambition to retain his place and power he sentences Him to the cross. Unworthy are all the motives of action, sinful, despicable even to us with our dim knowledge and blurred conscience; what suffering they must have caused Christ—all the motives of the populace, of the leaders, of the judges of His own supreme court, of the judge of the empire of the world. There seems only one thing that can be added: the cowardly desertion of His friends, the betrayal, the denial; they all forsook Him and fled. Yet there is another thing, too, the brutality of which human nature is capable: the soldiers mocking Him, buffeting Him, crucifying Him—the crown of thorns, the nails in hands and feet, the exposure and agony of the cross. Yes, one thing more of suffering: He the purest, noblest of men, the Son of Man, is crucified between two thieves.

Now let us reverently try to realize what was the suffering that came upon our Lord directly from God. In His suffering from man, in all this combined suffering that sinful humanity could bring upon Christ, there was of course involved, without excusing man at all, the permission of God. This Christ recognized when He told Pilate that he had no power except as God had given him, and in other of His sayings. This the Apostle Peter mentions at Pentecost. "Christ being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay." But beyond this the dying Christ upon the cross had the added suffering directly from God.

We read in the Gospels that while our Lord was hanging upon the cross, there was darkness over all the land from the sixth hour till the ninth hour; and at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Beginning at noon the darkness lasted hour after hour. It must have appalled all the people who had crucified Him; they must have waited in silence the result of this frown of God upon their act. But it seems it was more than that. Jesus endured it too in silence; and then He could endure it no longer and He made this cry with a loud voice. The cross did not kill Him. The frown of God killed Him. God had forsaken Him.

Here as in all His suffering there was no desert of it on His part. His last loud cry was that of true faith of the Son of Man, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” But He stood in close relation to sinners; He suffered from them and with them; He represented them, and so endured this culmination of all human suffering in its sinfulness; He endured the sting of death; He was forsaken of God. When they took Him down from the cross they did not break His legs as they did those of the two thieves, for He was already dead. The spear thrust in His side did not kill Him. He was already dead, and the blood and water that flowed forth indicated that He had died of a broken heart. The mental and spiritual sufferings of Christ killed Him; not only the bodily wounds but the being cast out of men, the being forsaken of God. So His work was finished, His redeeming work. “It is finished,” He said.

He was buried by His friends; loving hands laid Him in the tomb of the rich, with many fragrant spices, and a Roman guard watched over the tomb; it was a burial fit for a king. The last words of this article of the creed, “He descended into hell,” mean that His spirit left the body and went to the place of disembodied spirits. His saying to the repentant and believing thief, “To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise,” His prayer to God, “Father, into thy

hands I commend my spirit," these and the general teaching of the Scripture show that His suffering for our sins was ended with His death upon the cross.

Now we must try to learn what was accomplished by this great feature of the life and death of Christ as set forth in this article of the creed: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified dead and buried. He descended into hell." The silence of the creed of the Church as to the meaning of His death is perhaps a caution to us of the great difficulty of the subject. What was the meaning of Christ's death? The best of all teachers is Jesus Christ Himself.

What did Christ teach concerning the meaning of His death? There are four great teachings of Christ concerning the meaning of His death, and there is a marked progression in this teaching of that which is so difficult for us to understand.

The first half of Christ's ministry was devoted to teaching the nature of His kingdom. Then He asked His disciples concerning the results of this teaching, "Whom do ye say that I am?" They confessed Him as the Christ. Then both Gospels, Matthew and Mark, say that Christ began to teach them that He their King would be rejected by the people and be killed. They could not understand it. Then He told them

that they too must be willing to die as He was.

This is the first meaning of His death, the most easily understood, to die for a cause—for a kingdom. This is one of the experiences of human life at its highest reach, to be so devoted to a cause as to die for it. The roll of such heroes in the world's history is long and splendid and leads one to be proud of humanity.

A few days after this incident Christ again taught His disciples that He would be delivered into the hands of men and they would kill Him. He then tells them of dying to save others, as the shepherd seeks the lost sheep; and afterwards He tells them plainly, “I lay down my life for the sheep.” This is the second meaning of His death. Here too human nature at its highest may share the dying of Christ. There are many instances in which men have risked their lives, have lost them in saving others. Many a mother has given her life for her child. Many a physician has given his life in trying to save another.

When Christ came near to Jerusalem on His last journey to that city He again tells His disciples of His now near-by death. And now He adds, to warn them before of some harsh features of it, the Gentiles would mock and scourge and crucify Him. He now tells them He would so give His life as a ransom for many. Here

is the idea of substitution, of dying in the place of another. This is the third meaning of His death as taught by Christ Himself. Here too human nature may rise to such a height as to share this kind of dying with Christ. There is something of this in the death of a soldier for his country. There is something of this when a soldier takes into his own breast the shot that otherwise would have struck down his captain. When drafting into the army was resorted to in our war for the Union it sometimes occurred that a friend went in the place of a friend; he took the place of the husband or father for the sake of wife or children; he gave his life a ransom—died instead of another.

Now we come to the last of the four great teachings of Christ, that of our text. It is the solemn hour of the last supper. To-morrow Christ will die upon the cross. This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins. I die as a sacrifice for sin. All the mysterious meaning of sacrifice through the ages is summed up in the death of Christ. In the sinner's place He bore the penalty of sin; He was forsaken of God, the last bitter dreg in His cup of woe.

In this He stands alone—man cannot share with Him. We can only confess our sins, and trust Him to save us from the guilt of sin—He tasted death for us.

The Apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and in the light of the resurrection give us in the Epistles a fuller teaching of the meaning of Christ's death; but their words are only after all an exposition of His “for the remission of sins.” Peter says, “He died the just for the unjust to bring us to God.” John says, “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.” Paul says, “He died to declare the righteousness of God that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus.” A coming article of the creed also teaches more fully of the requirements of the forgiveness of sin.

We sometimes think of the wrath of God against sin as something like our quick anger when provoked and think it impossible God should have it. We are right. It is impossible. But there is such a thing as righteous indignation in man. Sometimes a judge in giving a sentence is terribly severe, and we recognize that such righteous opposition to crime is the foundation of our stable government. Purify this of all sin, magnify it in your utmost thought, and it may somewhat resemble the righteous opposition of the divine nature against sin; and this too is the foundation of our only hope of recovery from sin. So terrible is it that Christ, our substitute, our representative standing in our desert when He faced it, uttered the cry of

anguish on the cross. He gave up His life—He shed His blood for the remission of our sins.

Some men think they are good, their virtues will save them. At any rate God will be indulgent to them. It will be wise for all such to meditate upon their character and prospects in the darkness of the cross, with Christ's cry of anguish reaching their souls.

Many trust in Christ as their Saviour. They cannot fully understand the full meaning of His death. But they know they should hate the sin that brought such suffering upon Him. Seven hundred years ago the Waldenses in the south of France under persecutions fled to the hills and mountains. They had a password by which they knew each other and were led to defend and help each other and together to do all the good they could to all men, even to their persecutors. "Will you do this?" one asked and added, "for the love of Christ." The other replied, "I will do it," and added, "in Christ's name."

We live in quiet times but the same spirit should fill our lives all our days. All we are, all we do, should be "for the love of Christ and in His name."

VII.

*Christ was delivered for our trespasses
and was raised for our justification.—*
ROM. 4: 25.

“THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD”

THE day after the crucifixion was the Jewish Sabbath and the high day of their national feast of the Passover. Great multitudes from all over the land thronged the city streets and the temple courts; but the great teacher, the great miracle worker whose fame was known to all and who had cured many of them and of their friends of diseases, they had crucified; He was silent in the grave. An awe must have filled that Sabbath day from the sepulchre where Jesus lies dead and buried.

The priests ministering in the Temple see the vail hastily repaired of the rent from top to bottom, the strange memorial of their seeming success and a fear-inspiring premonition of their dreadful failure. The friends of Jesus, disheartened and hopeless, mingle with the worshipping throng or mourn alone. Some with never dying love long for the morrow when

they may visit His tomb. At length the darkness of night hushes the city into silence. A light gleams on Golgotha where around a watch-fire the Roman soldiers are sleeping while their sentinel paces to and fro before the sealed door of the sepulchre.

The midnight hour passes, the third watch is set; and then begins to dawn upon the world its first Easter morning. The grave cannot hold Him, for He is the Prince of Life, the Son of God, the Son of Man. He triumphs over sin, death and the grave. He rises from the dead in His own power, and in the power of the Father.

Science with its great knowledge and power has its limits. It cannot create life even in its lowest forms. It often prolongs life, wonderfully snatches life sometimes from the edge of the grave. But science cannot restore life. The agony of love and the skill of science stand alike powerless by the side of the dead.

Science in its methods of investigation, in sifting and testing evidence, in its power of detecting fraud has greatly advanced man's knowledge of truth. Many things a more credulous age would believe are set aside as doubtful or incredible by this intelligent age. Yet here is a most wonderful event.

Our article of the creed says, "The third day he rose again from the dead." The creed

herein sets forth a remarkable, well authenticated and important truth for our careful consideration.

It is a most remarkable event. Successive generations of the race of men have passed into the silence of the grave. The earth is encrusted with graves, and the grave holds fast its own. Jesus, the Son of Man, lies in the grave, one of the race of men. The grave will surely hold Him fast.

Materialism stands by the grave of Christ as by all other graves with no hope, only despair. It regards human life as the highest flower of material development, and death as the killing frost that has destroyed it. The resurrection of Christ, as of any man, is not only improbable, it is impossible. But materialism need not trouble us; it is false throughout. We know we are something more than refined matter.

A skeptical criticism alleges the resurrection of Christ is a myth, the imagination of His deluded followers. But Christ did not live in an age of myths, but in an historical age when lives stand out with great distinctness, long after the time of David and Isaiah, of Socrates and Alexander, of Cicero and Cæsar.

Yet this most remarkable event which can be accounted for only by the exercise of supernatural power is generally believed in this intelligent age. This can only be as the demands

of science as to the needed evidence of such an event are fulfilled. We may glance at the general scope of such evidence.

While the event is astounding there was no obscurity connected with its surroundings. The powers of investigation enlisted were sufficient to establish the fact. The most thoroughly equipped scientist of our day, had he been present, could have done no more than the disciples did.

Christ was clearly dead. His friends buried Him. His enemies watched His grave. He was buried with the wound in His side with which it was impossible that He should live. The spear thrust of the Roman soldier had reached His heart.

There can be no doubt about the death or the identity of Christ. The sepulchre was broken and empty. Those who knew Christ intimately were convinced of His risen life. The doubter Thomas was convinced with reference to the spear thrust. The life Christ now lived was on the other side of the grave, not a return to ordinary conditions to this life, but a deathless resurrection life. The wounded side, the barriers of man's works, the limits of space and of vision are all frankly recognized.

The confidence of the witnesses, as well as their investigation, excludes all doubt. Their truthfulness of character is beyond question.

Their variety of statements confirms the central event. Their disinterestedness is manifest; they encountered opposition and loss from the first through many years of unwavering testimony and many encountered death by it.

The circumstantial evidence is strong—things that cannot be accounted for without the resurrection of Christ, the Christian Church, the Sunday of the week, the observance of Easter day, the counting of the centuries from the life of Christ on earth.

We need now to carefully consider the importance to us, and to the whole race of mankind, of the resurrection of Christ.

Tell us that Socrates rose from the dead, and we answer at once, It is not worth investigating. It would make no difference to us if he did. It would not prove that his teachings were true. They, as all teachings of philosophy, arise from human reason and must stand or fall as they appeal to human reason. Socrates made no claim for himself that needed his resurrection to substantiate it.

But Christ did. He claimed to be the Son of God. Christ was a great teacher of most lofty truths. He taught “God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Now His resurrection from the dead does not prove that. That teaching stands on its own merit; it appeals to our reason.

But His claim to be the Son of God makes His death the most remarkable thing. Well may it awaken the wondering adoration of the angels. But being the Son of God, that He should rise from the dead is the most natural thing.

You remember He was put to death on this charge. He stood before the highest court of His people. The High Priest put Him under oath. "Art thou the Son of God?" Christ answered, "I am." Then the court sentenced Him to death on the charge of blasphemy, that He claimed to be the Son of God. Then as they had no power to execute Him they took Him to the Roman court. They charged Him before Pilate with claiming to be King. This arose from His claim to be the Son of God, their Messiah, their anointed King. Pilate asked Him, "Art thou a King?" Again Jesus answered, "I am." Upon this Pilate sentenced Him to the cross, for he knew he could not retain the confidence of the Roman Emperor and allow a rival king to live.

So Christ on this charge was crucified, dead and buried. Had the grave held Him fast, had He remained dead, the charge of blasphemy in claiming to be the Son of God would have been proved.

But the sentence of the highest courts on earth was carried to the High Court of heaven, and reversed. The third day He rose from the

dead. He was proved the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, as the Apostle Paul declares, and as we see at once when we consider the case carefully and fully. Surely this is of vast importance to us. If He is proved to be the Son of God then we should acknowledge Him as our Lord and our God. The doubting Thomas, convinced by the resurrection, used that word of tender and loving possession which we should each one use, “My Lord and my God.”

There is a further element of vast importance to us for our salvation in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Being the Son of God the wonder is that He should have submitted Himself to death. We look back to His own teaching concerning the meaning of His death, as to the reason of His giving up His life for us. He died for a cause as other men do; He died in His effort to save, as others do; He died as a ransom in place of another, as other men do. In all these He is an inciting example to us, to live worthily and die bravely for Him and in the service of our fellow men. He lives again as our leader, and we may follow Him.

But you remember another of His teachings as to the meaning of His death. This formed the terror and hardship of His dying which pressed out the prayer to the Father in Gethsemane. This explains the terrible blackness of

His death which pressed out of His breaking heart upon the cross the cry, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He taught that His death was a sacrifice for sin, His blood was shed for the remission of sin. He died as a sacrifice to save sinners, to save us.

Now the question of supreme importance to us is, Has God accepted that sacrifice? The resurrection of Christ from the dead is the conclusive answer. He is indeed the Lamb of God, as John the forerunner said at the beginning—"He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus, He saves His people from their sins. He has borne the curse of sin. He as a representative of His people has offered Himself a sacrifice for their sins. He died upon the cross; His body was broken, His blood shed for them. God has accepted this sacrifice. All the claims of the law are fully satisfied, for God raised Him from the dead.

These are the two great facts involved in the resurrection of Christ, the two great truths proved by it. First, He is the Son of God. Second, His sacrifice for the sin of the world has been accepted by God.

Now let me ask a personal question. Of course the answer to the question will depend largely upon of whom it is asked. I will ask it therefore of two great classes of people. First

I will ask that large class who are indifferent to religion. Many are moral, intelligent, cultured but still they are largely irreligious.

What profit have you received from the resurrection of Christ? The answer is prompt and clear. Why, none at all. So I will ask another question. What profit have you received from the constitutional convention of 1787? The answer is prompt and clear. Why, none at all. I never heard of it. Surely in both cases it is a thoughtless answer—and in the first case far more so than in the second. We owe it to the wisdom of that convention that we live under the best government ever devised by man. True, the convention did not build your house, or spread your table, or make your clothes, or form your business and social relations. Nevertheless all these would have been far different if it had not been for the work of that convention. So you have great profit from the resurrection of Christ. You live in a Christian land, you share in the material, intellectual, moral and spiritual advancement which is being brought about by the risen Son of God. There is a great variety of character and influence among His followers to-day as in past ages, but however far off and haltingly they have followed Him they have made Christian lands far better for the average man to live in than are any other lands: and the more Christian they are

the better they are. Priceless, countless blessings you enjoy to-day from living under the enlarging influence of the Son of God who rose from the dead. Still you are not saved. However many blessings you now enjoy from Him, you are depriving yourself of far greater by not believing in Christ. Perhaps in this too you are simply thoughtless; you have not considered the matter. So now that you may consider what you are missing I will ask this same question of an earnest believer in Christ. The answer of course will be of faith. They will not be benefits one can handle or estimate their value in worldly coin; they are spiritual benefits and as such are of greater value than can be measured by any money standard.

What profit, oh believer in Christ, what profit have you received from the resurrection of Christ? The answer is prompt and clear. My first profit is a change of condition, great and glorious.

We live under an excellent government in our free country. But all the excellency of the government while it protects and blesses the good citizen is arrayed against the disobedient, the lawbreaker. So the strong and excellent Divine government is against the sinner. My conscience recognizes some little, not fully, that I am a sinner. My natural condition then was that I was under the condemnation of this good

government of God. But now I believe in Christ. As my representative He obeyed the law of God perfectly and is entitled to all the rewards of obedience. As my representative He bore the terrible curse of sin, all that I deserved, and His bearing my curse has been accepted of God. Those represented in another share the act and fate of their representative. This runs through the character of the race of man. So I trusting in Him share in His act and fate. The law has no longer any penalty for me. He has borne it all. I am entitled to all the rewards of obedience, the favour of God and eternal life. He has deserved it all, and for me. I cannot fully understand it; it is beyond my power of appreciation. Throughout eternity I will learn of it, and praise and love Him for His blood-bought salvation. My change of condition is from condemnation to justification and it is through the resurrection of Christ. He was delivered for our offences; but has His work been accepted, is it sufficient to justify us? Yes, He has been raised from the dead: the whole debt is paid, the whole reward is won. As the text says, “Christ was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.”

My second profit is a change of character. My Saviour lives and makes me share His life as I trust in Him. In my natural state while I could see the good and approve it, the bent

of my character was sinful. I am still far short of perfect obedience; but I love Christ, admire, adore and serve Him. I have been raised to a new life in Him. He is my living Lord and lives in me and I in Him. He applies to me His blood-bought salvation. As He rose from the dead so He raises me to a new life. This new life has new aims, new motives, new sustenance, new hopes, and these are all from the risen Lord.

My third profit is the well assured anticipation of a glorious future. Death is no longer the frown of God on sin, but the smile of Christ welcoming me to His presence. As Christ has passed through the grave and waits me on the other side so I am confident His resurrection is a pledge and an illustration of mine.

All these benefits I receive from trusting in Christ.

So the believer commends the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, to the sinful world. What He has done for me, what He is to me, what He promises to me—all this He will be and do for every one who trusts Him.

VIII.

And it came to pass while he blessed them he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.—LUKE 24: 51.

“HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN AND
SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF
GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY”

IT is stated that our Lord remained on earth forty days after His resurrection, during which time He appeared unto His disciples and taught them concerning His kingdom. We have an account of ten such appearances and some record of His teaching. But He did not dwell with His disciples as of old; He appeared and disappeared to His chosen ones at His pleasure and in widely separated places, and was not subject to the conditions of our usual life.

There is deep significance in His non-appearances as well as His appearances. He did not appear to the soldiers who guarded the tomb to convince them of His identity; they had scarcely known Him. He did not appear to Pilate to satisfy his idle curiosity concerning truth. He did not summon His judges into

His presence—the High Priest and the Pharisees, His willful enemies; nor did He appear to the indifferent mob. He had taught and warned all these solemnly and earnestly, and now He passes them by in silence, a silence more impressive than any spoken word. But He appeared often and tenderly to those who had listened to His teachings, who knew Him well and who loved Him, and who could bear witness of Him to all others whom they could interest in Him.

Then came His last day on this earth. He had returned from Galilee to Jerusalem. He leads a company of His disciples through the streets, out of a gate of the city, across the brook Kidron, past the Garden of Gethsemane, up the Mount of Olives to its top towards Bethany. 'Then He lifted up His hands and blessed them; He was parted from them and was carried up into heaven. Could there be a more unadorned account of such a stupendous event? Even by our inspired writer it is the very simplicity of truth. Earth could no longer hold Him; He yielded to the power of the yearning heavens. They listen to the words of blessing dying away in the distance. They strain their eyes to catch a last glimpse of His look of parting love.

Who can imagine His reception beyond the cloud, the angelic escort, the outburst of

heavenly praise, the throne of glory? They never saw His face again until each one in turn awoke in His presence in that heavenly land and was satisfied.

Our religion is based on facts. Our convictions, our principles and feelings binding us to God are based upon the facts of His revelation in nature and in His holy Word. The tests of an alleged fact are the same in all departments of truth, and it is so with the fact of the ascension of Christ. There are three tests. First, a fact must be attested by careful and truthful observers. The disciples who attest both the resurrection and the ascension of Christ are, we have seen, such observers. Second, it must be in harmony with other facts of the same class. Third, it must be followed by its own consequences, facts that cannot be accounted for without it.

These last two tests deserve our careful attention. The ascension of Christ is in harmony with all other known truth of existence and of personality. There are great mysteries in our religion, but they are not like the mysteries of other religions, trivial matters bewildering the mind only to degrade it; these are of infinite subjects, and their study enlarges and elevates the mind and quickens reverence and true piety. They are mysteries simply because they are lines of truth running out beyond our power of

mind to fully follow them; they are beyond our comprehension, but in lines with all we know, lines going out into infinity.

The believer is filled with awe as he stands in the presence of immensity. With bared head on a cloudless summer night he stands under the mystery of the starry heavens; from the little ball of the earth he looks off upon blazing suns in the infinity of space. That little twinkling star yonder he knows is a sun many times as large as his own sun that a few hours ago made the western sky beautiful with its declining beams—a sun so large and at the same time so far away that he can only see a flash of light that has taken many thousand years to reach his eyes. Should there be a planet revolving around that great sun, and intelligent beings upon it with like powers as his, as is quite probable, they could not see his earth, or even his sun, so small is it and so far away from their eyes. This believer, this little being on this little earth is facing the mystery of existence, for the whole heaven is full of blazing suns, and he knows that beyond these heavens, visible to his unaided eye, there stretches away on every side and above and below an infinity of space in which are many such suns; and that in this immensity of space he is floating on his little earth upheld by the Almighty Father, maker of heaven and earth.

He turns now to his Bible and it tells him of a place where angels and saints have their home and where God specially manifests His presence, where is, as it were, His throne; and now the first thought of his faith is that these blazing suns are the outposts, the sentinels of that place of God's throne, that place of light and glory.

Into this heaven, the palace of the great King, of which the starry heaven is but the gem spangled doorway, Jesus, our King, has ascended. Into this heaven, the temple of the Holy God, of which the starry heaven is the magnificent portico, Jesus our High Priest has ascended. Into this heaven, the splendid grove of loftiest philosophy lighted by blazing suns, Jesus, our Teacher, has ascended; and our thoughts simply follow Him. True, science tells us the multitude of stars are not moving in great circles around a great center; that all, our own sun and its planets with the others, are moving in various directions and in wavering lines; but the calculation is not complete. True, science tells us the utmost rapidity of flight, if as fast as the light flies, would require thousands of years to reach that central palace. But there is one thing that flies faster than light; our thought flies so. We are here one second, the next we are in that far-off sun: why may not the spirit fly with the speed of its

thought when released from its earthly conditions? True, heaven, the throne room of the great King, may be very near to us now, only we have no powers with which to know its presence—our eyes see only the light of the sun, but the light and glory of God's throne may be far beyond our power of seeing, or of any other powers we possess, which are suited only to these material surroundings. True, the Bible tells us God is a Spirit; He has no visible form; a pure spirit has no right hand. A great teacher has always to accommodate his statements to the condition of his scholars. We have right hands. All there comes to us in that familiar fact, of power, of favour, may be ascribed to God.

Heaven is not fully described in the Bible, simply because it cannot be. Whatever descriptions are given to us must be in terms we understand, in terms of our earthly experience. Using these terms heaven is a place of light and glory, the abode of angels and saints, the place where God manifests His special presence, the place of His throne. Into this heaven Jesus, the risen Son of God and Son of Man, our Lord, ascended. And there He is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. All the mystery of it is in full harmony with all the known truth of existence. The Son of God is at home again.

So the ascension of Christ is in harmony with

all the known truth of personality. We know of personality only from ourselves. There are different natures in our persons—physical, mental, spiritual; widely different as they are we speak of each personally. I am hungry. I am tired and must sleep; I think, I feel; so I aspire, I adore. Now we go a step farther, but it is a stupendous step. We say of Jesus Christ that in Him the divine nature assumed the human nature, the Son of God became the Son of Man in one person.

The Son of God dwelling through eternity in the glory of the heavens saw on this far-off earth a race of intelligent beings involved in the corrupting power and the terrible guilt of sin, and He yearned over them in His infinite love. So He came to this earth with the sole purpose to save sinners. Of all beings who have ever lived upon this earth He is the only one who came with a conscious purpose. All of us children of men came here without the choice of our wills. Of all the countless planets in the wide universe of God inhabited by kindred races of intelligent beings this may be the only one where dwells a race of sinners. What effect the salvation of our race may have upon these other races, if such there be, we cannot tell. Suffice it the Son of God took upon Himself our nature and became the person Jesus Christ that He might save us from our sins.

We often speak of the humiliation of Jesus Christ. Wherein did it consist? Not in His poverty; many noble men have been poor. Nor in His limitations to a single age and land; many great men have been so limited. His humility, strange as it may seem to us, was in His becoming a man at all. He, the glorious Son of God, the creator of all the wide universe, took upon Himself the nature of His creature: we cannot fathom the depth of this humiliation. We speak of the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross as voluntary. Wherein was it voluntary?

We see Him led to the cross by armed Romans and surrounded by a passionate mob. What stronger power than the world empire and a multitude of unreasoning men can we imagine, and He is in their power. Now let the light of the ascension of Christ fall upon the Roman spears and upon the angry faces of the mob and we see at once that had He chosen to ascend from the foot of the cross all the powers of the world combined would have been unable to hold Him. It could as easily have grasped the stars and dragged them from their courses. He the Son of God in the person of Jesus Christ had the right, and the love of sinners, to make the sacrifice of Himself upon the cross. Herein also lies the value of His sacrifice, to atone for the sins of the world. Herein also is seen the glory of the resurrection. He

rises from the dead by His own power, and that of His Father; His sacrifice is accepted. It would have been manifestly improper for the glorious Son of God to remain upon this earth, His work being accomplished, or for Him to die again as men do. He arose to a life beyond the grave. Hence the ascension of Christ is in full harmony with the glory of His person and work. He returned triumphant to the throne of God in heaven.

His work of sacrifice for sin was fully accomplished and accepted and now He ascends to the throne of God in heaven, and as He ascended “He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men, that the Lord God might dwell among them.”

When Christ commissioned His disciples to preach His Gospel to all men He promised to be with them always to the end of the world; He would lead, guard and cheer them with His presence. There are expressions in Scripture which describe the relation of Christ to the believer as so intimate that He dwells in them. “Christ in you the hope of glory.” We often say that Christ while on earth was limited in space, but now is everywhere present. The mystery of personality is by no means ended by the ascension of Christ. The human nature of Christ was not endowed with the qualities of the divine nature so that it could be every-

where present. But neither was the divine nature limited by the human nature, so it was confined to a particular place. The physical man is confined to a particular place but he has other power and we know the thought and feeling powers of a person, a man, cannot be localized, and it is human nature with its many rich, divinely given qualities that the divine nature assumed. So that which can be said of either the divine nature or the human nature is said of the person Jesus Christ. Thus it was that Christ spoke of Himself when on earth: "Before Abraham was I am." Again, "The Son of Man which is in heaven," and again to Nathaniel, "When thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee."

So our Lord at the right hand of the throne of God to-day is a true man in every sense of the word as He was when He lived here upon the earth. The heart which beat in sympathy with human hearts in their infirmities and sorrows, which reached down to the fallen, yearning to save them, which grieved over the impenitent and hardened, which welcomed the penitent and trustful, is the same divinely human heart to-day in heaven. The hand that touched the eyes of the blind and they saw, that touched the leper and he was cleansed, now holds the scepter of glory and power. Just as truly the person Jesus Christ is present with us

now and always by His divine nature, having divinely human love and sympathy for us in all the experiences of this life.

The ascension of Christ, besides being in harmony with all known truth of existence and of personality, also meets the third test of truth. It is followed by its own consequences, by facts that cannot be accounted for without it. Our Lord in His last discourse with His disciples on the night before His death said, “It is expedient for you that I go away, that the Comforter, the near caller, the Holy Spirit, may come upon you for I will send him unto you.” Then follows the description of what the Holy Spirit will do in the world. On the day of Pentecost the Apostle Peter accounted for the marvellous gifts of speech and for the consecration of believers by telling the people and their rulers that Jesus Christ whom they had crucified had been exalted by the right hand of God, and had poured out the Holy Spirit upon the people. The birth and growth of Christian character and influence, and of the Christian Church are accounted for not only or mainly by the belief in the resurrection and ascension of Christ, but by the facts believed in as well. Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God in heaven, and so by His Spirit He is present with the believer and with His Church in all ages and in the whole earth.

Thus we see in the light of the ascension of Christ what is the true belief in Him. We are apt sometimes to think it is like a belief in any historical character who has lived, taught and passed away. We sometimes think it is admiring His life, understanding His teachings and influence, even understanding something of the meaning of His death. It is all this, and far more. It is the personal trust of a needy soul in a living and present and ruling Saviour. He is with us now by His spirit and in His providence; He has divinely human love and sympathy for us in all our varied experiences. The believer recognizes that while he trusts and loves Christ, while he tries to live in the service of God in true thankfulness there is much imperfection in him; even his aspirations, his prayers are imperfect. He recognizes as well that Christ is now in heaven, his advocate with the Father, and that His righteousness awaits for him, that it covers all his imperfections, and is the full assurance that he shall at length be presented "holy and without blemish and unprovable before him"; that as Christ so loved us that He died for us, just as truly He loves us now and lives for us; as the Apostle Paul says, "We shall be saved by his life."

The ascension of Christ thus brings the unseen and eternal world near to us. How near it must have been to His disciples! They saw

Him ascend, they knew He still existed; His messengers, the two men in white apparel, were at once by their side. Henceforth the heavens had a new meaning for them; it was very near by, though they were unable to see its full glory. Their own lives were enlarged and ennobled as they thought of entering heaven. Jesus Himself had told them, “I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again for you—that where I am there ye may be also.” Where is heaven? We know not. Our earth seems small compared with the great universe, still it is a part of it. Our lives may seem to us small compared with the heavenly life, but in our small duties, and it may be heavy trials, we have the divine companionship of the living Saviour. With Christ, His mission to the earth, His departure to the heavens, the unseen and eternal are brought near to us and our lives too are enlarged and ennobled. Where is heaven? It is a place where Christ is. What is heaven? It is a condition. To be like Christ. To be like Christ and to be with Christ, this is our heaven. We have a foretaste now, and the full glorious fruition awaits our awaking from the sleep of death, in His glorious presence.

IX.

When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations. . . .

—MATT. 25: 31-46.

“FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD”

THE last clause of the Apostles' Creed concerning Jesus Christ states that He will come again to the earth from the throne in heaven, and this time it will be to judge the living and the dead.

There are many passages of the New Testament that teach this coming of Christ to be the judge of the race of mankind, and many more which are based upon it. It may be well for us to bear these in mind while we direct our attention mainly to the teaching of Christ Himself on this subject.

Let us then consider the Last Judgment as described by our Lord Jesus Christ in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

The prevailing impression to-day is that this subject should be addressed to unbelievers,

especially to great sinners to arouse them to seek salvation. But we note at once that this description was spoken by Christ to His own disciples. He had ended His ministry of teaching the people, He had denounced in terrible terms the false religious leaders, He had taken His farewell of the Temple. Now He is speaking to His disciples on the Mount of Olives, overlooking the city as they are on their way to Bethany. It was a solemn hour of His life; He was within two days of the cross. He has foretold the destruction of the Temple, and in answering the questions of His disciples He describes the future time ending in His second coming to the earth. He speaks striking parables concerning mainly the judgment of His followers. Parables cease and this description of His coming to judge the world closes His teaching of His disciples concerning future time.

We see the design of Christ therefore was to incite His followers first of all to faithfulness and perseverance, and so all His followers in the ages to come: and thus through their lives and teachings to quicken and impress the conscience of all mankind and so lead them to seek salvation in Him. It will be well for us to bear this in mind throughout our meditation on this stupendous theme.

It is evidently the description of the General

Judgment. "The Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations."

We are to distinguish clearly the present from the future and are not to forget for an instant that Christ is now ruling and judging the world and each one of us. His judgment agencies are now hovering over sin ripe for condemnation as the vultures hover over their prey. The dominion of Christ is being increasingly exercised and will be unto the end. Just as truly the end will come in the General Judgment. So we are not to forget for an instant the particular judgment of each one at death. The parable of Dives and Lazarus implies an individual judgment at death as do the words of Christ upon the cross to the penitent thief, "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." The impenitent, unforgiven sinner passes at his death into perdition while the believer can say with the great Apostle to the Gentiles, "absent from the body, present with the Lord." "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better."

There are two stupendous events clearly set forth as accompanying the coming of Christ to the General Judgment. The Apostle Paul speaks to the Athenians of "a day in which Christ will judge the world in righteousness,"

and again he writes, “that the Lord Jesus Christ will judge the quick and dead at his appearing,” and again, “that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” “The world,” “the quick and the dead,” and “we must all appear,” as well as Christ’s own description imply that great truth taught so clearly in the Scripture—the Resurrection of the dead, some to shame and everlasting contempt, and some to everlasting life. Identity and change are the two seemingly conflicting truths of the Resurrection as taught in the Scriptures. The identity will be as real as between the babe in the cradle and the man of mature mind, as between the seed and the flower—and the change will be as inconceivable. A following article of the Apostles’ Creed will bring this great subject to our consideration by itself. Only now it is necessary for us to contemplate the successive generations of mankind assembled before Christ at the day of the General Judgment. Let us not think of the day itself as any twenty-four hour day or small period of time. There is no haste in any of the works of God, no neglect or confusion incident to hurry; “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.” The day of judgment will be like the day of creation, like the day of grace in which we live. There will be ample time given to the judgment of the race of man-

kind, when the living and the dead shall stand before the great white throne of the righteous Judge. Time is however not the main thought, for the Judge will know all the life and the inward character of each one fully without further need of examination.

The second stupendous event associated with the General Judgment in the Scripture is the destruction of the earth by fire. The Apostle Peter says, "The heavens that now are by the word of God have been stored up for fire (or as it may be rendered, stored with fire), being reserved against the day of judgment when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Science speaks of the earth having already passed through many great convulsions, describes it now as a ball of molten fire crusted over with a thin layer of solid rock, shows by earthquake and volcano the possibility, even the probability, of a future convulsion—that it is stored with fire, as the Scripture says. But nature, while it teaches of change of form, speaks also of permanence of substance and force; it gives no intimation of annihilation but of the possibility, even the probability, of a new heavens and a new earth, indescribably more rich and beautiful than our present home, the culmination of God's great

ideal of creation “wherein dwelleth righteousness,” as the Apostle Peter describes.

These two associated events show to us the General Judgment in its distinctive character as the termination of what we call the present dispensation, the present stage of God’s dealings with the race of mankind. While there is much that is inconceivable to us about the close of this dispensation the fact itself seems indispensable to our thought. The everlasting continuance of the present economy is not conceivable; it had a beginning—just so it must have an ending. The ending will be on a scale of grandeur and sublimity in full harmony with the righteousness of God who gave His well beloved Son to save sinners from their sins—“He will judge the world in righteousness, by the man he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all men in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

In this sense it will be the culmination and vindication of the present every-day judgment of the individual and the race, and will clear away what may seem to us now as mysterious in the various complications of our social lives, as the prosperity of the wicked and the adversity of the righteous; the inner life and the outward circumstance will appear in the right light and in due proportion both to the individual and to the race.

Another sublime purpose of the General Judgment appears to be the manifestation to the assembled universe of intelligent beings of the righteousness of God in His dealings with the sinful race of man. Hence we are told that the Judge will be attended by all the holy angels, and that the fallen angels are reserved "in bonds until the day of judgment." Science studying God's great book of nature teaches us of the probability of other races of intelligent beings inhabiting planets revolving about distant suns in the immensity of space. They may know of our race already with their superior powers and if so they must wonder at the righteousness of God in sparing a race of sinners, and at His wonderful love for that race in sending His Son to this little planet and in His taking upon Himself our nature in His great condescension and sacrifice to save us from our sins. So God's other book, His supernatural revelation in the Bible, speaks of the General Judgment of our race as in the presence of the "angels of his power," gazing in adoring wonder upon the results of His Son's redeeming work as pronounced by Himself in His judgment of our race.

All the currents of human history are setting in to the Judgment. All generations of men penitent and impenitent are moving on to the Great White Throne. All the ranks of angelic

beings, holy and rebellious, are waiting for the manifestation of the righteous judgment of God.

We must now confine our attention to three general features of Christ's own description of the General Judgment of the race of mankind.

The first is that Christ teaches clearly that He will be the Judge. Whatever perplexities, even doubts, men may entertain of Christ's divinity it is quite evident that Christ in this solemn hour had no doubt Himself. In a quiet, concise, self-possessed way He describes His judging all nations, the reasons of His sentences and the execution of His decrees. The resurrection of the dead, the assembled nations, the gathered angels, the throne of glory, while the earth passes away in smoke and flame, and a new heavens and a new earth evolve these all center about the person of Jesus Christ and proclaim Him both Son of Man and Son of God.

There is the retribution of justice in His being the appointed Judge. In two days after this description on the Mount of Olives He was judged by the multitude, by the supreme court of His own nation, and by the Roman governor, and He was condemned to the cross; and ever since He has stood before the judgment seat of human souls of all who have heard of Him and has been accepted or rejected of them as the Saviour of sinners.

There is also the wisdom of justice in His be-

ing the appointed Judge. He is the Son of Man—the God-Man. He knows the nature of man in His own person; He has passed through our earthly experiences, has borne our trials, has faced our temptations. He knows us all together. Our brother man is our Judge.

There is also infinite love in the justice of His being the appointed Judge. No one has ever loved us as He loves us. If He condemns us nothing can be said for us. Each one so condemned must as heartily condemn himself, for He loves us more than we can love ourselves.

The condemnation of the lost will be by the Saviour who came to save the lost. No one ever did so much for them; He loved them so He died for them. We can give our dearest friend into His hand. He loves him with greater love than we ever did. We can commit ourselves into His hand. No one has ever yearned over us to save us as He yearns over us. If He pronounces sentence against our friend, if He pronounces sentence against us, it will be richly deserved. If He condemns it will be evident to the assembled universe of witnessing angels, it will be evident to all one's friends, it will be evident to one's own self that no other sentence could possibly be given that even Christ Himself could not save him. Each one will have to confess, however hard to bear, that

the sentence is the only one infinite love could pronounce.

We now consider the nature and grounds of the General Judgment as described by the Judge Himself. He will separate the righteous from the wicked. The present dispensation is a comingling of these two classes. We are bound to each other by many close and strong ties. At its close there will be a complete separation. The Great Judge will separate them as easily and as accurately as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will separate them as He discerns their character.

Now the Judge describes His test of character of each class as He gives the ground of His decision; and we must at once confess our great surprise. The test does not seem to be a moral one; there is no recounting of splendid virtues or of horrid crimes. The test does not seem to be a religious one; there is no mention of worship in private or in public, nor of its neglect. The test does not seem to emphasize faith; there is no mention of trusting in Christ, of being forgiven and accepted in Him, of being renewed in Him, of confessing Him, nor of rejecting Christ. The test does not seem to be one of obedience to law—at any rate nothing is said of loving God supremely, as required by the first and great commandment, nor of disliking or even hating God. But when we con-

sider more carefully the ground of His decision, we see it embraces all these, the moral, the religious, the faith, the obedience to law. The test shows a character like Christ's in that it looks upon and treats all mankind as He does. The test shows the presence of a brotherly love of mankind so great and constant that it acts freely, spontaneously, instinctively on the whole life. This is something different from natural benevolence, an impulse to help awakened by an appealing case. This may coexist with an utterly selfish character. This must be more than mere sentimentality which may coexist with hard-hearted cruelty. This must be a principle in control of life, in control when one does not plan the deed, when it comes out spontaneously, so that the deeds of helpfulness are the natural outflow of the love—a surprise even to the doer. The absence of this spirit is thus detected even when one has natural benevolence and sentimentality, so that one may truly say, "I would have been kind only I did not know you." He did not have anything in his life which resembled Christ's deep, steady, constant love for all men.

The test then is the presence of Christian love for Christ, for His followers, for all men in such a degree that it controls the whole life so that even our unconscious acts are directed and charged with it. This we recognize at once

flows from and so is the evidence of our love to God in Christ—a supreme, grateful love; it flows from our faith in Christ; it proves that it is more than a mere intellectual acknowledgment of Him, more than a mere profession; it is a living trust in Him, a vital union with Him; it shows also the spirit of true morality is its source. Formal morality may have one virtue, as honesty, accompanied by a dark vice, as impurity; this seems a living morality, a Christian love that comprehends all the virtues; it shows also the sincerity and earnestness of all religious observances.

Christ as Judge makes the test a striking one by identifying Himself with the miserable. We know how His life when on earth was a spontaneous ministering to the wretched. Many expressions in the Gospels show there were many miracles besides those specially described. Before Him as He passed through the country was the heavy cloud of misery; after Him the bright sunlight of health and happiness.

We also see that the progress of Christianity over the world has been attended by the same spirit to a large extent. The old Roman and Greek civilizations, as the heathen civilizations of to-day, largely neglected poverty, sickness and the prisons, while slavery flourished. Now society itself in Christian lands has abolished slavery, helps the poor and the sick and the im-

prisoned. It is to-day going farther in seeking to diminish sickness by fostering sanitary conditions, to lessen poverty by the principles of justice and even by the spirit of love in the treatment given by both the employer and employee in business and labour, and by conducting prisons in a way to stimulate and help the imprisoned to become good citizens. There, however, is much still to be done by society for all these needy classes, which may still be called to some extent neglected classes. There should certainly be a larger infusion of a Christian spirit into the life of society. This can only be of course by a greater number of Christians and by a greater amount of Christian love. There is some reason to fear that many professed Christians are mere formal ones, and that even genuine ones have not yet attained to the largest possible degree of Christian love.

It behoves each one of us to make the matter personal. Not to think mainly of the action of society in general, not of individual acts of what may be called wayside charity, but to examine our inner life. Is it so controlled by Christian love for all mankind that it acts spontaneously, unconsciously, fully, as well as by design and intention, in the family, in business and in society? One destitute of this Christian love is a selfish man, though living in seeming morality. One possessing this Christian love

is acknowledged as His follower by Christ, his Judge.

Let us now consider the sentence of the Judge. These are the two strong and wonderfully suggestive words in the concise sentence—Come and Depart. The personal character of Christ the Judge is itself attractive to the one class. He draws them to Himself. Just as truly, and it is a terrible truth, Christ is personally repellent to the second class. The selfish soul would be unhappy in heaven where all is love, unhappy in the presence of Christ the lover of mankind, unhappy in the presence of the Father, whose name is love. Not in the mere word of his lips but in the nature of the case, the character of Christ says, Depart.

So the meaning of the next words are clear, Come ye blessed of my Father, ye who have his blessedness, that of loving. Depart ye cursed, ye who already in your natures are cursed, who know not pure love. The remainder of the sentence provides a condition the Judge of infinite righteousness and mercy sees is suitable for each class: Come ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Heaven cannot be fully described to us; all description is limited by our language. We look out upon the fair earth and the wonderful universe—there has been progress from the far-off beginning, but the

plan is not yet complete. All so far has been but a preparation; the consummation is yet to be—"the kingdom prepared for you." There love shall flourish and even grow more like the eternal and infinite love in a condition suitable to its blessedness. Eternal life in perfect surroundings. Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Here too the place of punishment cannot be fully described to us, for our thought is limited to our language. Christ uses words with which we are familiar—"outer darkness," "worm dying not," and here fire; they seem contradictory, but are really cumulative, and all expressive of terrible conditions, conditions of punishment. Those having the loveless character go into a condition suitable to them, for all the terms used are restrictive not only to happiness but to growth of the qualities of character. Depart from me—from love. Associate with those confirmed in selfishness. Go into a condition restrictive of further growth in selfishness. We sometimes think of eternal punishment as if it was everlasting woe inflicted for certain acts performed in time; here it is seen to be a persistent, confirmed, hardened character finding its own place and associates. Our ideas of time are limited. Let our imagination take its wildest flight, we cannot reach the limit of time. Still the question arises, What is be-

yond? From the darkness beneath comes the answer: A sinner still, with the selfish, under punishment. From the light above comes the answer: Still loving, with Christ in the kingdom of love.

On the ceiling of one of the chapels in Rome there is the great painting by Michael Angelo of the Last Judgment. Those who have made a critical study of it say that the faces of the blessed are expressive not of realization but of eager anticipation; they are attracted by the bright vision of the kingdom. So likewise the faces of the cursed are not filled with woe but with an awful dread, a shrinking from the impending punishment. The great artist has evidently caught the meaning of Christ. He did not design to give a full description either of the blessedness or the misery, only of the attractiveness of the one and the repulsiveness of the other—and this not mainly of the condition but of the character—the attractiveness of the blessed character, the repulsiveness of the cursed character.

Let us pause here that Christ's design may be fulfilled in us.

X.

But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me.—
JOHN 15:26.

“I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST”

THE last article of the Apostles' Creed that speaks directly of God says, I believe in the Holy Ghost.

The formula of Christian baptism and the Apostolic Benediction used generally at the close of our church services bring what is called the doctrine of the Trinity into constant remembrance as a fundamental truth of the Christian religion. There is increasing mystery as we ascend the scale of being—mystery in the existence of matter, of life, of man's life, physical, mental, spiritual, and at length the greatest mystery of all in the being of the self-existent God.

In the unity of the being of God there is the trinity of persons. In the one God there are distinctions we call persons. These distinctions are not merely in our idea, but in the reality of being, so that each is a person, each can say I

of himself and thou or he of the other, and peculiar properties, operations and offices may be affirmed of each. Still God the one person is not one and three in the same sense; the trinity is not contrary to our reason but above it, the greatest mystery of existence. We cannot understand our own personality. Each one of us may say, I hunger, I think, I worship. There are distinctions physical, mental, spiritual, and each expresses itself in terms of personality, but each is so linked with the others that it has no separate existence.

But it is not only or mainly in our own nature that we may see indications of a Trinity in the being of our Creator but specially in the revelation He has made to us in the Scriptures. At the very beginning of the hymn of creation in the first chapter of Genesis it is said, “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” This awakens our thought. “Is the Spirit of God” only a mode of expressing the power or action of God, or is there in the being of God a distinction called the “Spirit of God”? This last thought becomes progressively prominent as we follow the unfolding of the Scripture revelation until we reach our text. Here Jesus Christ speaks of Himself as a person, of the Father as a person, and of the Comforter or Holy Spirit as a person. Yet we find that each person is always represented as having such

relation to the others that He has no separate existence by Himself. There is but one God. Certain meanings of the word person, as we use it of ourselves, evidently do not apply here; independent existence can in no sense be attributed to either Father, Son or Holy Ghost; they exist only in relation with each other as one God. Our word person evidently does not express the whole truth; it is our human effort to comprehend the incomprehensible. Yet the distinctions are real in God, for each speaks of Himself as a person, though always as united in being with the others. This truth has been carefully considered in the articles of the creed concerning the Father and the Son, and we are now to consider the office and work of the Holy Spirit.

The revelation of God is made to sinners and has reference not to the mystery of the being of God in itself but only as far as needed to make us understand the great salvation worked for us and offered to us. The Father creates, maintains and rules. He sent the Son, and through Him forgives and restores us to His favour. The Son came forth from the Father, assumed our nature, represents us, died for us and so redeemed us to Himself. Now we consider the Holy Spirit in His loving work of applying the blood-bought salvation to us.

The deep reality in the being of God is the

basis of this threefold revelation of God. God the Father describes the general relation of the Creator and Ruler of the universe to us, the children of men. God the Son describes the mission and work of Christ as the Saviour of sinners. God the Holy Spirit describes the execution of the plan of salvation to the race of mankind.

Christ the incarnate Son of God wrought out His mission in a few short years in a far-off age and land; this supreme revelation of God was localized in the necessities of the case. Now the Holy Spirit makes Christ, His life, His teaching, His redeeming work universal in all lands and ages: to the world awakening belief, and to believers revealing Christ in His fullness of saving power.

Our Saviour, in His farewell address to His disciples the night before His death upon the cross, follows the text with what is called the Holy Ghost chapter, the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel of John. In the early verses of the chapter, especially in the seventh verse, He teaches that the coming of the Holy Spirit is dependent upon His own death and resurrection. In the eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh verses He describes the mission of the Holy Spirit to the world. In the fifteenth He describes the mission of the Holy Spirit to believers.

When we ask, as we must, how is Christ made universal to all lands and all ages, how does the Holy Spirit work this great result, we can at once see that it is in at least three ways. First, by the record of Christ's work as handed down to us in the Scriptures. The Apostle Peter says of the Scriptures, "Men spake from God being moved by the Holy Spirit." This gives us the whole Scriptures, and especially the Gospels. Secondly, by the personal influence of believers. In Scripture times and ever since the knowledge of Christ has spread among men from those who have trusted Him as their Saviour and lived His life. Thirdly, by the loving influences of the Holy Spirit Himself through the Scriptures and through the testimony of believers to persuade men to believe in Christ.

We now follow the Saviour's description of the mission of the Holy Spirit. First to the world. "He will convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." In the first and in each of the following cases the Holy Spirit uses Christ Himself in His life here on the earth, and especially in His death, to accomplish His gracious purpose.

First, He convicts the world of sin because they believe not on Christ. The Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the world in all the perfection of His being—the man who did the will of God,

revealed the nature of God. The man "who went about doing good," the lover of His fellow man. The man who had not a thought of selfishness, who was wholly devoted to God and man. Not to recognize Him in His genuine goodness reveals to the thoughtful man that his own moral nature is blind. Natural blindness may be tested thus; he cannot see the glimmer of a candle, the glare of an arc light; he cannot even see the sun—surely he is blind. Then beside as a man recognizes, and to the extent he recognizes the goodness of Christ, he sees his own glaring defects. The man relying upon his morality, even proud of it, must as he looks upon Christ say, I do not love God as Christ did. I do not love my fellow man as Christ did. And now the Holy Spirit shows us this perfect man upon the cross, cast out by man as unworthy to live. Who crucified Him? Our brothers, our fellow men. There is something in man that is repelled by pure goodness, is awakened to enmity by the rebuke of goodness. That goodness I do not recognize shows me my blindness; that goodness I do recognize shows me my defects; that goodness that arouses my enmity shows me my hardness. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, the sin of not believing on Christ, not recognizing Christ, not trusting Christ, not adoring Christ.

In the next step of His mission Christ says,

“The Holy Spirit will convince the world of righteousness because I go to the Father and ye behold me no more.” The Holy Spirit in showing the world its sin reveals its ruin, its helplessness; now He shows the world the righteousness of Christ and so reveals its refuge, its hope. Death often clarifies our view of a virtuous life—lifts the whole life to our view in its strength and beauty. The Israelites murmured against Moses while he lived and revered him after his death. So Christ directs our view to His completed life. As we look we are compelled to say, His life is perfect; He loves God so He dies in doing His will; He loves man so He dies for him. Such a life deserves a translation to heaven, an ascension to the Father. But far more is taught by the Holy Spirit. Christ claimed to be the Son of God and the Son of Man, to be the Saviour of sinners, to give His life a ransom, to shed His blood as a sacrifice for sin, to die that man might live. It is an astounding claim by this righteous man. Is it false? Then surely God will pronounce it false by His unbroken grave. Is it true? Yes, beyond a doubt, for God raises Him from the dead, and He ascends to the Father. The righteousness is accepted, the ransom of the sinner is paid, the sacrifice for sin is sufficient. Sinners would be banished by the righteousness of Christ were it not that He was their repre-

sentative—the Son of God of infinite dignity and worth, the Son of Man our brother. He lived for man. He died for man. His life, His death as our representative has been accepted by the Father, and now our representative is at the right hand of the throne of God.

What hinders us now from sharing in this blood-bought, glorious salvation from sin? There is but one thing, the hold the prince of this world has upon us, the power of sin over us.

The third feature of the mission of the Holy Spirit, Christ says, is that He will convince the world of judgment because the prince of this world hath been judged. Both God and man have judged him. Deep in human nature is the power of judging, of approving or condemning principles leading to courses of action.

Principles do not have a separate existence in themselves; they are abstractions of our thought; they exist only in persons. We may in our thought sum up such worldly principles as embodied in a person, and we may call him the prince of this world, and then we may judge him. It is of this Christ speaks. He says, The Holy Spirit will arouse by my death this judgment power in human nature to judge those principles and forces which brought me to the cross.

When we reflect we see that the whole world

has pronounced and is constantly pronouncing judgment upon the main actors in the crucifixion of Christ, that is upon the principles embodied in them; upon these actors under the willing sway of the prince of this world; and the sentence is one of condemnation.

What is the world's judgment of Judas; of the unscrupulous, selfish love of money embodied in him? What is the world's judgment of Caiaphas; of the proud intolerance of religious opinion and power embodied in him? What is the world's judgment of Pilate; of the absorbing ambition for political place and power embodied in him? What is the world's judgment upon the multitude: of the fickle nature in the masses, of the love of applause, of fame, embodied in them? What is the world's judgment upon the recklessly wicked, upon the Roman soldiers and the impenitent thief; of the cruelty, the gambling, the reviling embodied in them? What is the world's judgment of the disciples forsaking Christ in the hour of His distress; of the weak loyalty to a person and a cause which fails when hardship and danger threaten? The Holy Spirit has so awakened the judgment power of our nature that we condemn the prince of this world. Why then should we not rebel against him? Why not throw off his yoke? Why should each one be held any longer by the principle seen and

instinctively condemned as it takes its sinful part in crucifying Christ? The love of money is forever condemned in Judas. Shall I let it make a Judas of me? The pride of opinion is forever condemned in Caiaphas. Political ambition is hideous in Pilate. Popular applause is not worth living for as seen in the multitude. Presumptuous wickedness is repellent at the cross. Half-hearted loyalty is unworthy the soul: all these principles of action cry aloud for condemnation.

These principles of action which have such a large influence, when we see them at the cross of Christ, are utterly condemned, the world itself being aroused to judge them. The only wise thing for us to do is to repudiate them, to cast off their power, and turn to Christ our Saviour.

With these few strong words the Saviour describes the complete work of the Holy Spirit in the world, revealing through the life and death of Christ man's sin, the Saviour's power to save, and showing us how unworthy of us are the worldly principles which would keep us from accepting Christ as our Saviour. In His last address to the people in the Temple as recorded in the twelfth chapter of John the Saviour states this truth with its companion truth. “Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

And I if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men to myself." The prince of this world is unworthy of our allegiance, is cast out. Christ crucified is universally attractive. Resisting the power of the world let us yield to the attractive power of Christ. Now when one says, I believe in the Holy Ghost, he not only believes this is the mission of the Holy Ghost in the world as Christ teaches, but he trusts in the Holy Ghost to thus work in him so he sees his sin, sees his Saviour, and sees his liberty from the prince of this world, who has deceived and enslaved him.

We are not to think of the Holy Spirit as an arbitrary and capricious sovereign working only where He will and as He will, so we cannot foresee and rely upon His work, but must await His irresistible, mysterious power for our salvation.

God never acts capriciously either in nature or in grace. He has made man a free moral agent and always treats him as such. The Holy Spirit does not coerce a man to believe—such belief would not in any sense be man's at all. The Saviour Himself tells us the character and mission of the Holy Spirit. We know we can rely upon His character, we can depend upon His mission, accept it and act with Him.

We have already seen that the Holy Spirit makes Christ, who was localized upon the earth centuries ago, present now in all ages and in

all lands. The Holy Spirit now reveals Christ and carries on His work in the whole world as present in His spirit. When Christ was upon earth He taught men, He invited men, He urged men to believe in Him but He never coerced men. So now the Holy Spirit appeals to the God-given nature of man, to his free will; He instructs of his sin, of his Saviour, and of the condemnation of the prince of this world who enslaves man, and so He influences and leads man. If now we do not rebel against the prince of this world we choose to remain his slaves; the full responsibility is ours—it does not belong in any sense to the Holy Spirit. If we rebel against the power of sin in us we follow the influence of the Holy Spirit and may rely upon His help for success as He helps all believers—which is the second part of His mission.

Belief, as we saw at the beginning of the Apostles' Creed, is both intellectual belief and heart trust; these two go together in our belief in all the persons of the one Godhead. When we believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, we trust Him as our Father. When we believe in Christ we trust Him as our Saviour. So when we believe in the Holy Spirit we not only have an intellectual belief in His character and mission in the world, but we trust Him, as He brings us to Christ and renews us in His likeness. We through His in-

fluence on us cast off the sway of the prince of this world and come under the sway of the Prince of Righteousness. May we never reject the mission of the Holy Spirit, never grieve Him; rather may we heartily accept His mission in the world and joyfully accept His mission to believers. Our Saviour describes the mission of the Holy Spirit to believers in the fifteenth verse of this sixteenth chapter of the Gospel by John. "All things the Father hath are mine, the Holy Spirit shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you." The full revelation of the power and grace of God in the Saviour He will declare unto you.

The remaining articles of the Apostles' Creed will in some measure set forth the enlarging experience of the believer of the full salvation of Christ as wrought in him through the growing confidence, loving trust and steady loyalty of his belief in the Holy Ghost.

In recent years our knowledge of the heavens has been greatly enlarged by stellar photography. A dry process photographer's plate is held facing a certain part of the heavens steadily for several hours. Of course this can only be done by freeing the plate entirely from the movement of the revolving earth and it must be done only when the air is free from dust and clouds. Then a remarkable picture of themselves is wrought on the plate by the myriad

flashing suns beyond the power of the largest telescope to discover. All the stars we knew before are clearly upon the plate and multitudes of others we had never seen. So the Holy Spirit leads us and helps us to look steadily to Christ, frees us from the sway of the prince of this world—of the world movement and the world mists and clouds. And as we so look to Christ our souls grow in His likeness: the virtues and graces in Him are revealed to us and impressed upon us by the Holy Spirit.

XI.

Now ye are the body of Christ and severally members thereof.—I COR. 12: 27.

“THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH”

THE Apostle is speaking in this chapter of the Church. While writing to a particular church he describes the whole Church in all ages and lands—calls it the body of Christ. The articles of the Apostles' Creed we have thus far considered have directed our faith to God as He reveals Himself for our salvation. Now this and the following articles tell of our faith as seen in our experience of this salvation. The first says I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.

Our word church is a translation of the Greek word used in the New Testament meaning an assembly or congregation of people called together by a herald or proclamation. The society called together by Jesus Christ of all those who believe in Him is called the Christian Church. Christ as Head of the Church, the source of all authority in it, instituted two sacraments setting it apart and distinguishing it from

the general societies of the world: Baptism, the rite of initiation, and the Lord's Supper, the right of maintenance. The word Catholic comes from two Greek words meaning the entire, the whole; the Catholic Church therefore means the whole Christian Church. This Church began its existence in Judea many centuries ago, and as it has lived through the ages and spread into many races and lands it has developed many varieties in government, in worship, in creed and in mode of living; but these have all been the effort of the human mind in varied races and conditions to learn more fully of the great Head of the Church and of the way to serve and honour Him. Mistakes and errors may have been made and may now be cherished, but the Catholic Church centers its faith in Jesus Christ, its Lord and Saviour. The main divisions existing to-day, each uses the word Catholic. The Roman Catholic means the whole Roman Church. The Greek Catholic means the whole Greek Church. The Protestant Catholic means the whole Protestant Church. Each of these has divisions in itself, particularly; the Protestant has a multitude of denominations, each having some distinction in government, worship, creed or mode of life. But when we use the words of the Apostles' Creed the Catholic Church means the whole Church, including the Roman, the Greek,

and the Protestant, the universal Church in all lands and ages.

The word holy means set apart to the service of God. Holiness is the reverse of moral impurity; it is the active principle of purity casting off all impurity; it is positive righteousness. This is absolute in God. It can only be relative in man, and of course in a society of men, though engaged in the service of God. The avowed purpose and effort of this society flow from faith in Christ, and recognize that only to the extent of its being holy can it serve and honour the Holy God. Here, as always in the creed, belief is not only intellectual acceptance but heart trust. I believe in the Holy Catholic Church means not only I believe in its existence, but I have confidence in its principles and purposes to such an extent that I am identified with it. Such an one may believe more heartily in one branch of the Church than in another, but he recognizes it as a branch, and therefore believes in the whole, the Holy Catholic Church.

There is then a society in the world which is distinct from the world in that it recognizes Christ as its head; it agrees in its faith in Him, it acknowledges His authority and tries to live His life; it has been gathered by His word and spirit, and it proclaims that word and conveys that spirit to the world.

In the last article of the creed we saw the

mission of the Holy Spirit was to convince the world of its need of a Saviour and to lead to trust in that Saviour. Now we see that the Church is formed of those who thus trust in Christ and that its work is to proclaim Him to the world through the Holy Spirit.

Let us take in the sublime thought. The great universal Church of Christ is called from the world, agrees in its true faith and is endowed by the Holy Spirit and commissioned by Christ to live His life and carry on His work in the world. It represents Him in all lands and in all ages. While divinely called and commissioned it is made up of human members with many virtues and many frailties. Some members are strong and true, some are weak and some are false. We are to be always liberal in our judgment of others and strict in our judgment of ourselves, and we are to judge of any society by its consistent members. So judging of the Holy Catholic Church we should be filled with admiration for it and strongly drawn to it—should believe in it heartily.

Three things about it may be rapidly mentioned. First, it is an ancient organization. Before the time of Christ men had been gathered by the supernatural revelation of God preparing for Christ, the saints of the Old Testament, the heroes and poets and orators of Israel—a noble line. Since the time of Christ

the Church has gathered its members and carried on its life and work. Races, nations, empires, civilizations, Egyptian, Babylonian, Grecian, Roman have risen, flourished and passed away. They are remembered only by their monuments. The Church needs no monument. It still lives. It is not decrepit with age. It is in the vigour of youthful life and divine energy.

The second thing to be noticed is its universal character—it is fitted for humanity. It is not confined to any favoured nation, or race, or class of men. None are too noble to be called, and none are too lowly, none too cultured and none too ignorant, none too rich and none too poor, none too good and none too bad. Wherever human lives are found there is need for the Church and the Church goes there as commissioned by Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit to show the need and to urge all to trust the Saviour. The Church gives its invitation and gathers its members to its equal rights and privileges wherever man is found, whether in the heart of Africa or in the highest college town of our favoured land, in the deepest slums of a city or in its finest palaces: it seeks and welcomes humanity wherever found.

The third thing to be noticed is, it is a beneficent organization. Christ said, "Ye are the salt of the earth," and salt is gathered only

to be used when needed to preserve and purify. Christ said, “Ye are the light of the world,” and light is not to be hidden but to shine to drive away darkness. So the Church ever takes the lead in the progress of the race in morals and true welfare; its influence is a blessed one—a beneficent one in all ages and lands. When the dark ages settled upon Europe caused by the barbarians, the Goths and Vandals overwhelming the Roman power and civilization, the Church preserved much of the literature and culture of ancient Greece and Rome and kindled the new light of the teachings and life of its Saviour, and this has grown and spread to the civilization of to-day. In that cruel dark age of feuds and rapine mercy found its refuge in the Church. Alas also the world spirit of cruelty entered its bosom. The deficiencies of the Church are recognized as unworthy of her, as coming not from her Lord, but from the world. The persecutions in the Church were largely this false spirit trying to crush the true Church within its own organization; the persecuting spirit was the world spirit; the persecuted spirit was the true Church trying to grow in the knowledge and spirit of Christ.

The large tolerance of opinion and Christian charity prevailing to-day come from the true Church in its growth in the knowledge and spirit of its Lord and Head. We cannot over-

estimate the beneficent effects of the teaching and life of the Church upon the race of man in all lands and ages. It has ever taught the loftiest truths—holding God high in the thought of man as Creator, righteous Ruler and gracious Father; holding man high in his own thought as more than an animal, as a spiritual being created in the likeness of God, and though fallen into sin still capable of being restored in that likeness, as having the lofty call to learn of God, to grow in His knowledge, His grace, His likeness and His service. So the Church has ever gathered in its membership the penitent and the renewed and taught them of Christ, and incited them to live the Christ life in the world. Wherever the Church life has prevailed many beneficent results have followed. Woman has been lifted to the position of honour rightfully belonging to her. Marriage has been sanctified, family life has been ennobled, children have received much elevating attention, shackles have fallen from the slave, the poor have received sympathy and much judicious help in self-respecting support and larger justice and the sick and suffering have received its ministry in lightened groans, in restored health and in more sanitary conditions of living.

The Church has had its deficiencies, its periods of depression; it could not have been otherwise, as it is a human organization; but its faith has

been in the Saviour and its general aim to proclaim Him to the world by its word and its life—and its influence, greater at times than at others, has been generally a beneficent one.

Let us in our favoured land and age give due credit to the main agency of our civilization; let us think and speak honourably and lovingly of the “mother who has borne and trained us.” In the Church also we find incentive, culture and opportunity to render the best service to our fellow men. We are not to be contented with an unconscious beneficence, however large, but are called by Christ the Head to devise and foster a larger social service of the Church, the intentional influence and effort it may and should put forth to benefit all conditions of men in all directions.

On the other hand we hear the criticism that the Church has been left behind by the great attainments and achievements of this wonderful age in which we live. It is claimed and it is probably largely true that during the past century man has acquired more knowledge of nature and more control of its forces and more resulting power and wealth than in all the former centuries. It is an age of the sciences—and of applied science—science of the heavens and the earth—man grasping the power of steam, of electricity, of explosives, boring through mountains, sailing over seas, riding

swiftly on land, and flying in the heavens, sending his messages over the land, under the sea, through the air. Wonderful attainments and achievements, vast knowledge and culture, vast power and wealth.

Much of this advance may be attributed to the human mind becoming freed from the bondage of superstition; and this has been largely due to the Church holding before man the lofty thought of the one God, maker of heaven and earth, our Father, and the lofty thought of man as the child of God, and so inciting him to read the book of nature—to discover its meaning and use its forces.

Still our civilization, in itself alone with all its attainments, has its clear limitations and great dangers. The present terrible war among the Christian nations in Europe shows that these great forces of civilization have not eradicated the savage nature of man but have become the fearful means by which it destroys life and property; alas also it shows that the Christian Church has not insisted enough in its teaching and life upon love as the law of God, the law of "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost"; it has not at any rate taught and influenced the nations it has made to some extent Christian, to have the Christian spirit in full control, has not taught each nation to love its neighbour as itself.

While Christianity has not eradicated the fighting propensity of mankind it has, we feel, in the case of our nation and our allies given it a noble purpose. Fighting in itself becomes arrogant, strives for self and power, for the victory of might, for the having its own way even by the oppression of the defeated. But there may be fighting with a noble aim, to defend the weak, to relieve the oppressed, to secure the right against the assaults of might. Thus Christianity in the middle ages turned the warrior into a knight. Thus in our day the spirit of the individual knight has taken possession of nations. Ours is the most advanced age of chivalry, as seen in the act of our nation. She has entered the war not for selfish aggrandizement or material gain, but to defend her weak citizens from the assault of cruel power upon the seas, to aid France in her distress as she aided us in our struggle for freedom, to save Belgium and the weak nations from being absorbed in an arrogant world empire, to make the world safe for democracy, for the rights of the people of all the earth to choose their own mode of government, to destroy the power of militarism that humanity may have liberty. To secure these noble purposes our nation, as of old the individual knight, is distinguished for honour, courtesy, bravery, magnanimity; she pours out her blood and her treasure for the

rescue of the oppressed, for the welfare of mankind. In all this our nation, under the influence of the Church, has caught the spirit of our religion.

Now as we look more carefully at the social condition of our country in this time of great material prosperity it becomes clear that the great knowledge and power of our age, our boasted civilization, may be a source of danger, may even threaten its own existence, may prepare for its own overthrow. Emerson has said, "The soul of improvement is the improvement of the soul," and civilization does not in itself secure this. All men have equal rights but all men do not have equal ability. It is right to develop the individual to his highest powers but the incentive should be not for him the one, but for humanity for the all. The equality of rights applies to the inequality of ability. There are men much stronger in many ways than others—in grasping knowledge and power, becoming leaders, employers, capitalists. The grasping of the knowledge and power of the age by the strong makes them stronger, but does not change their character. If they have a selfish spirit they will become more selfish by its indulgence, and will trample on the many and the weak.

This evidently leads to social conflict and even threatens the destruction of civilization. In our

cultured and rich land we have immense riches in the possession of a comparatively few, a large middle class of the prosperous and well to do, and alas also a wide-spread poverty—a large number of people who have difficulty in earning a poor living. Resulting we have great combinations of wealth, of capital ever seeking greater wealth, and great combinations of labour seeking higher wages, shorter hours, better conditions.

The frequent conflicts of capital and labour threaten a growth of class distinction and class hatred destructive of civilization. The attempt to control these combinations and contests by law and force is within the province of national organization, and shows the limitations of our social order, and evidently is not an adequate remedy for the growing evil.

The spirit of the strong must be changed from a selfish to a Christlike spirit; the hope of doing this is only in the Christian Church. The Church is to preach Christ as the Saviour and further is to preach and show the nature of His salvation—that it is Christlikeness. The owner of a tenement house to be a Christian must have the interests of his tenants at heart. The owner of a factory to be a Christian must try to conduct his factory as Christ would conduct it. The president of a railroad, the owner of a coal mine, the director of a corporation to be a

Christian must try to conduct his business as Christ would conduct it. So labour, the great power to develop the world, to be Christian must have the spirit of Christ seeking the good of all. This kind of church teaching and living appeals to the highest manhood and prevents the scandal to religion arising from the many unchristian lives of its professed followers.

The Church may and should sit down by the weak and oppressed, the poor and the sick, should administer the needed sympathy and charity to them, should cheer the suffering with the consciousness of a present and sympathizing God and should hold before them the hope of a better life to come.

But far, far more than these loving ministrings it should preach and live in a way to incite to a Christlike life. It should replace selfishness and greed as motives in grasping the wealth and power of the age with love for Christ and for humanity, for mankind He came to save. It should replace Adam Smith's rule, "Every one for himself in the competition of life," with Christ's golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have others do to you." To say that politics in national life, that international relations, that business on a large scale cannot be carried on by the golden rule of Christ is to banish Him from the great affairs of social life. The Kingdom of God includes all humanity and

the golden rule is the law and the spirit of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The mission of the Church is to proclaim this truth and to live this life. Loyalty to Christ includes loyalty to one's nation—and far more, loyalty to mankind; includes patriotism—and far more, humanity. Loyalty to Christ includes church life, home life, social life and business life. To exclude either kind of life from the golden rule, to exclude small business affairs or the largest business affairs from the golden rule, is to be untrue—disloyal to Christ.

We should surely rejoice in the high civilization of the present age in our favoured land and in Christian lands generally, but we cannot help seeing its dangers and particularly its limitations. If the soul conscious of its sin, of its need of forgiveness, of its need of a new life to overcome its selfishness comes to the high civilization of to-day and asks for needed help it receives no answer; the lips of science with all its learning and culture, the lips of power, with all its wisdom and wealth, are dumb before such a cry of the soul.

Only the Church can help such a soul; it brings that needy soul to Christ the Saviour. He gives forgiveness and new life. Then the Church welcomes that believing soul into her fellowship. Thus the Church becomes a social force; within itself awakening the spirit of fel-

lowship in the true worship of a growing Christ-likeness: and without itself, in each community, country or city, asking what would Christ do here, finding the needs of a community, of a nation, of the world; and then awakening all its dormant power in the enthusiastic work of ministering. It is the body of Christ, the representative of Christ in all lands.

XII.

Ye are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.—EPH. 2: 19.

“THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS”

THE ninth article of the Apostles' Creed contains two kindred statements; the first we have just considered, the second, “I believe in the communion of saints,” is now before us.

In the New Testament the members of the Church are frequently called saints; some of the Epistles are addressed to such. It was a general designation of all believers in Christ who had confessed Him in becoming members of His Church. It is quite reasonable then that a creed made up of the statements of the Apostles should speak of the members of the Church as the saints—that is the holy ones. Nowadays the word has dropped out of common usage: the world generally does not call the members of the Church saints, nor do the members of the Church venture to call themselves saints. As the ages passed on from the

times of the New Testament the name saint became confined to those distinguished by special holiness of life, or those distinguished by special fidelity in trial, as the martyrs. That both the world and the Church have ceased to use the name for all confessed Christians may be regarded as a high tribute to the ideal of Christlikeness, but the word also has lost some of the incentive of the New Testament usage. The Apostle Paul in writing the Epistles did not regard the members of the Church as perfect in holiness, for he frequently rebukes errors of teaching and life and exhorts to growth in character and service. So Christ Himself did not regard His Apostles and disciples as perfect, but He taught them to recognize each other as disciples and to love each other as He loved them. The designation then is a great honour and a noble incentive; the followers of Christ are to regard themselves as saints and to live such lives that the world shall know them as saints.

In the text the Apostle speaks of new relationships formed by believing in Christ, "Ye were strangers and foreigners," without allegiance to Christ or love for Him; now "ye are fellow-citizens with the saints," obeying the laws and being loyal to the kingdom of heaven, "and of the household of God," inmates of the home established by God, members of the fam-

ily, governed by family feelings, and having the fellowship of family life. The communion of the saints is then their recognizing each other and sharing with each other the possessions, rights, privileges and duties of the citizenship and family life they have in Christ. Here, as in the other articles, the “I believe” includes the intellectual recognition of such a communion of life and privilege and especially a personal sharing in it.

What do the saints have in common, and what is their spirit of fellowship in their common possessions? We may in a single sentence describe it. They have one source of life—it is in Christ. They have one manner of life—it is growing like Christ. They have one service in the world—it is proclaiming Christ. They have one destiny—it is to be with Christ forever. There are various degrees of this life and its manifestations, many shining lives recognized at once as saints, many dim lives, but having some Christ life and so-called saints, set apart to the service of God.

Now as we think of our communion of the saints there are manifestly two great parts of the one glorious fellowship. The one is general—it is largely grasped by the imagination. It includes the far-off in time and space. The other is special—it is real in its presence with us here and now.

With regard to the general, we look back through the ages. We have fellowship with the saints of the early Church; as the Church spreads among nations we have fellowship with the saints in Egypt, in Armenia, in Greece, in Rome. As the ages pass on our fellowship embraces the saints among our race-ancestry of Northern Europe; and so we come down to recent years. There has been a great variety of belief, of worship, of character. But the life separated from the world as belief in Christ can be distinguished, and our interest in that life and obligation to it should be gratefully recognized.

Now we take a wide look over the great world of to-day. Some lands are Christian lands. Not all the inhabitants of these lands are confessed Christians, but such large numbers are, that the lands are called Christian. Some lands are heathen lands, but in nearly all these there are Christian missions and some confessed followers of Christ. So on all continents and on the islands of the sea the wide world over there are great numbers of saints. There is a great variety of saints—those just coming out of savagery, those in gross ignorance, those holding widely different views of some truths from ourselves, and having widely different manners and customs, but the life separate from the world as belief in Christ can

be distinguished and with that life we have communion, fellowship.

The Christian Church is the largest organization in the world to-day. It is composed of those acknowledging Christ as their Lord. Christ is the source of our common life. Race characteristics, mental powers, habits of thinking and living from a long ancestry make great variety in creed, worship, life. But the common source of the distinctive life, aim of life, service of life, destiny of life, is from Christ. Sectarian pride, the spirit of self-righteousness, all magnifying of self must give way to Christian love, acknowledging the Christ life wherever found, as the Apostle says, "Who are we to judge another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." We are cheerfully to recognize the Christ life, and share in its development, and help in its spread. We also are helped as others pray for us, as others incite and inspire us by their examples in widely different circumstances from our own. We are not all alike, but each in his own sphere of time and space makes his own contribution of hue and colour to the one Christlikeness and service we all have in common.

Now let the imagination strive to see and feel this general communion of the saints of all ages and climes. Untold millions of our fellows have

come out from the world, confessed Christ and so lived their lives that we have in our day become Christians, entered into their glorious fellowship and noble life. Untold millions are now separating from the world, confessing Christ and living His life in all lands the wide world over. They are one with us in love and aim. Untold millions will in the ages to come receive from our hands the glorious trust and great commission until the final triumph, and Christ shall reign in all lands and all hearts. Untold millions have passed on, are passing on, and will pass on to the glorious life at Christ's right hand. I believe in the communion of saints.

It is a great kingdom—the Kingdom of God. We have the communion of citizenship. We are citizens of heaven even while on the earth. It is a great family. God the Father through Jesus Christ. We are members of this family. Christ our Elder Brother acknowledges the family likeness. "They that do the will of my Father in heaven are my brothers and sisters."

It is through these loyal citizens—these members of the noble family—that three important agencies of vast influence have been established and flourish in the world.

The first is the public worship of the righteous God. On country hillsides and city streets stand church buildings; their doors are invitingly open, their bells ring out a welcome, and

multitudes assemble in them at times to worship God. The influence upon the nation, upon those who never take part in such worship, is very great, and in all ages and lands large numbers accept the invitation and welcome and become the worshippers of God.

The second is the circulation of the Bible. Its fine literature of narrative, poetry and oratory has impressed itself upon our English literature; and besides and above this it carries the purest morals and noblest ideals to all lands; and above all it bears the supernatural revelation of God, culminating in Jesus Christ, in many languages to many races of mankind. The influence of the Bible cannot be overestimated.

The third agency is the Christian Sabbath. The rest day so characteristic of Christian lands is the rich blessing bestowed upon the workers of the world. Many such weary toilers not only rest from their work but refresh their spirits by communing with the Father of their spirits. So much of greatest value lies in the general communion of the saints. Our imagination fails to grasp its full significance, but as much as we can grasp stirs the heart with love and praise.

We now turn from the general to the special—from the far off in time and space to the near by to-day. I believe in the communion of

saints—those I am associated with in our Church, in our country, town or city. There are a great variety of saints in every individual church, as in every denomination, and in the Church universal. In our individual church many have inherited from Christian parents traits of Christian character; they have grown up in Christian surroundings, they have been taught and cultured in the knowledge and likeness to Christ. Many others have been rescued from the habits and tendencies to sin; they have from infancy lived in the gloom of evil, have worn the chains of sinful habits. In their mature age, perhaps in their old age, the radiant Christ has opened their prison doors and struck off their chains, and they are His followers. In other cases many have had the sickness and weakness of sin, have been in the shadow of death, and the gentle hand of the good physician has been laid upon their brow and they look up with loving eyes to his kind face, and follow him. All kinds of characters are in our church of varied history, propensities, strength, but they have the one distinguishing feature now—life in Christ and some traits of Christlikeness. Their attainments, their dispositions, their conditions are widely different but they are called to be saints; they are saints in Christ. I recognize them as such. We are fellow-citizens; we are members of the same family. .

Then, too, in our church there are all social grades. There are the ignorant and the cultured, the dull and the bright, the active and the inactive, the employer and the employed, the lady of fashion and the maid of all work, the rich and the poor. The Church is the one organization in the world embracing such wide distinctions, giving to all her members equality of rights and privileges, of opportunities and duties; herein is her glory to the world, and herein is her incentive to kindly judgment and helpful fellowship among all her members.

As she embraces widely different characters and conditions she becomes a strong binding force in social life, checking many tendencies threatening the disintegration of society, and inciting to many tendencies for society's highest development. In this wide variety of church membership lies also the high exercise of the communion of saints. What we have in common overflows and conquers our differences; the saintly becomes more saintly in triumphing over the natural. Each one in this communion of saints recognizes in the other the beginning of Christlikeness—sympathizes with and helps the other in overcoming the old nature, is faithful and considerate and helpful in cultivating the Christlikeness. Thus the wide variety of character and condition, the great diversity among the saints, finds a unifying principle in

recognition, in consideration, in Christian fellowship.

The rich have consideration for the poor, the poor have sympathy for the rich—both are brothers in Christ. The employer and the employed in the house, in the store, in the factory, try to think and act as such in the other's place—they are brothers in Christ. The cultured and the ignorant, the quick-tempered and the sluggish, vie with each other in consideration for each other, arising out of recognition of their relation to Christ. "Love one another as I have loved you," was Christ's direction to His disciples as He bade them farewell before His death. The communion of the saints is the carrying out of this command. It is the tradition that the heathen used to say of church members—"Behold how these Christians love one another." Alas, the world no longer calls members of the Church saints nor do we venture to call ourselves saints, and it may not be quite so manifest in these latter as in those earlier days that Christians love one another, but still that is the ideal each one adopts when he says "I believe in the communion of saints."

We are fellow-citizens of the Kingdom of God—we are proud of the relationship. We are members of the family of our Father in Christ—we are keen to recognize family resemblances. We love one another not as a hard task, an irk-

some duty—love cannot act in such ways—but because each sees in the other something lovely, some feature of the Christlikeness.

Another great feature of this near-by communion of saints in to-day's stirring life is the sharing in the great privilege of preaching Christ to the world. In the early days it was not only ordained ministers who preached the Gospel; the truth and the life of Christ spread from individual believers as well, and the reputation of loving each other, of the social fellowship, was a strong commendation of the Gospel message. So in the communion of saints there is the awakened desire and the encouraging fellowship in seeking to win souls to Christ, to bring into the fellowship of the saints others from the world who are now strangers and foreigners, who are now sinners, that they may become saints. What is nowadays called personal work for Christ, friend with friend, acquaintance with acquaintance, soul with soul, flows from the communion of saints and constantly adds to this communion.

A legend of ancient times in England which has been the subject of so much painting, poetry and music illustrates our theme. The knights of King Arthur had varied talents but formed a circle of chivalric spirits. From this group Sir Galahad, the blameless knight, went forth in quest of the Holy Grail, the cup Christ had used

in the first communion supper. He thus sought deeper fellowship with Christ and His followers. On this quest he came to the enchanted castle in a gloomy forest guarded by knights of an evil character but strong and well armed—a quite vivid picture of a soul in the gloom and power of sin. Sir Galahad met the seven black knights in fierce conflict and disabled them. Over their prostrate forms he advanced to the castle gate. Now there was a strange transformation; the castle was no longer depressed in a gloomy forest but was standing out on a sunny hilltop: but it was still enchanted. All within were sound asleep. Sir Galahad knocked time and time again with the hilt of his sword against the castle gate, but with no result. At length there was a stir within, and soon the gate was thrown open and there issued forth twelve maidens, “each as fair as any flower,” and welcomed their deliverer from sin and death. From that time on the castle became the joy of all the countryside.

The seven black knights were the seven deadly sins, holding the soul in bondage. The twelve fair maidens were the Christian virtues and graces awakened by the call of Christ. The Apostle gives us names of the graces in Galatians 5:22, and eloquently describes the cardinal virtues in 1 Corinthians 13, and the greatest of these is love.

Can one imagine the honour and joy of Sir Galahad seeking fellowship with his Saviour and thus turning a soul from death to life?

I believe in the communion of the saints may express itself with a modern poet:

I live for those who love me,
For those who know me true,
For the heaven that smiles above me,
And awaits my coming too.
For the cause that lacks assistance,
'Gainst the wrongs that need resistance,
For the future in the distance
For the good that I can do.

Such an one has a goodly fellowship, is a citizen of a glorious kingdom, a member of a royal family.

XIII.

Through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins.—Acts 13: 38.

“THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS”

IF the Apostles' Creed ended with the only clause of individual blessing to be fully enjoyed in this life as pardon it would be a tame conclusion of a great creed. We need pardon undoubtedly, but that can never meet our full need, nor can it satisfy the craving of our hearts; only forgiveness can do this. So the creed says, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.” Here as elsewhere the belief is not simply the intellectual acknowledgment that there is such forgiveness, but a personal experience I have the forgiveness of sins.

Now we look at the text and we hear a proclamation of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and it follows the assurance that the believer in Christ is justified in Him, and this follows from the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ as is set forth earlier in this chapter of the Acts. This is the distinguishing feature of the Christian religion—the forgiveness of sins though complete and full. This was the subject of the early preachers, both of Apostles

and of all others, those set apart to preach, and also all believers. It was their joyous privilege to experience this forgiveness of sins, and to spread abroad the proclamation of God to all men of this forgiveness through Jesus Christ who by dying for them and now living for them justifies all who believe in Him.

Why did Christ die for us? To remove all that would hinder the forgiving love of God reaching us. Why did Christ die for us? Because the forgiving love of God sought in this costly way to forgive and so save us. What does the forgiving love of God through Jesus Christ do for us? It breaks down our opposition to God, our coldness, our hard-hearted dullness, our enmity, and awakens penitence and longing for reconciliation and new life of love and obedience.

It is therefore of great importance that we should have right views and appreciation of the forgiveness of sins. Justification and pardon are matters of legal relations. Forgiveness is a matter of personal relations. Only a judge in court can pronounce one just, that the law has nothing against him, that he is entitled to all results of obedience to the law. Only a governor or president can pardon a man, free him from the penalty of the law and restore him to citizenship under the laws of the state. But a friend may forgive a friend—the forgive-

ness removes hard feelings from both hearts. Now we recognize at once that there is no place for forgiveness in the office of either a judge or a governor. His dearest friend may stand before him convicted of an offence against the law; the judge can only sentence him, though it may be with tears flowing down his cheeks. The governor must not yield to personal feelings; he must uphold the laws of the state. He cannot pardon his best friend, though he pleads for such pardon with sobs; there must be other reasons aside from feeling to justify the exercise of pardoning power.

Now we turn from the small affairs of our state laws, the laws among men, and from our weak but clear sense of justice, to the great affair of the law of our being, and our sense of justice here. The law is the transcript of the divine nature and the description of our nature as God designs us to be. Love God supremely, love your fellow men as you love yourself. Have we kept it? Are we keeping it? Our own conscience being the judge, we condemn ourselves as sinners, guilty of breaking the law of God, the fundamental, deep and all-inclusive law of our being. No little thing this, but the greatest conceivable. What must the Judge who knows us altogether do? What can He do but sentence us? What must the King do—or shall we venture to use the language of our

land to-day—what must the Governor of the Universe do? What can He do but leave us under the penalty of broken law? There is no place here in Judge or Governor for forgiveness, for feeling, only for justice.

Now when we look at the other side, at the one indited before a court of our land for some offence, and the court frees him, pronounces him just in the sight of the law, that verdict does not say anything about the character of the man; he may not have committed that particular offence and still be capable, even prone to commit such offences, nor does it in any way change his character; it may foster a bad character. So when a governor for reasons of state pardons a man, the man may at heart be a bad citizen, and the pardon does not change his character; it may confirm it. Again these are little affairs—particular offences against some state law—little compared with our offence against the law of God, the violation of the law of our whole being. Here too there is character back of all violated law, in our case a corrupt character. We cannot conceive of God as approving or confirming this corrupt character. Our only hope of ever being saved is in His justice. He must maintain the righteous law of our being in our own esteem and before all mankind.

Now while a judge or a governor ought not

to be swayed by personal feelings, he may have them, and have them very strongly. It is hardly conceivable, yet he may be the father of the culprit, and the character and act of the culprit may be the hardest blows ever struck against the father's heart. While he may want to free his guilty son from all penalty of the law, he knows that will not be for the upholding of the law, neither will it be good for the son; it will encourage him in a wayward character. The judge must punish the son or the law is undermined in the esteem of all the citizens of the state. The social life is injured; he must punish the son or there is the terrible likelihood that the son himself will be confirmed both in wounding the father's heart and in warring against the social welfare of the state. It is hardly conceivable, yet the father's love for the son may be so great that he would sacrifice himself for the son, but he cannot devise a way. The laws of the state will not allow him to step down from the bench of the court, or from the chair of the state, and take the place of his son in the prison, and so free his son. They make no provision for such action. Could he do that, and should he do that, it would proclaim to all who heard of it how he valued the law of the land, and specially how deeply he loved his son; and certainly no stronger appeal could possibly be made by the father to the latent power of

good that might remain in the son to turn back from evil and love his father.

While it is possible such a deep self-sacrificing love may exist in a father's heart it is no reflection upon judges and governors to say that such a case has not been recorded in the history of the race, nor is it a reflection upon human laws to discover no provision for its exercise. There is much self-sacrificing love in human hearts—citizens for their country, men and women for a cause, friends for friends, parents for their children; wherever found and however pure and strong it may be it is but a faint glimmer of the divine likeness remaining in us. It comes from the infinite self-sacrificing love of the Father of our spirits. With us it does not always act with full knowledge of the case, with singleness of aim for the highest good, and with wisdom. With God this strong attribute of His nature is always infinitely wise and good. God is love and the highest manifestation of His love is His sending His only begotten Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins that we might live through Him. So the forgiveness of sin flows from the infinite love of God, and this love in maintaining the law flows to us through Jesus Christ, by whom believers are justified.

Now to be justified clearly means that God the Judge pronounces one just; there is no

penalty of violated law due Him; on the contrary he is entitled to all the rewards of obedience to law. He is a good citizen. How can this ever be brought about in our case? We know we are sinners, under the penalty of the law. How can we be justified? Only through the self-sacrificing love of God in His Son Jesus Christ taking our place, bearing our penalty of sin and by His righteousness entitling us to the rewards of obedience, and this being ours through our union with Him by believing in Him. That which human laws could not devise, human sacrifice could not accomplish, the infinite love and wisdom of God our Father in Christ has wrought for us. It seems beyond our grasp, but there are several forces familiar to us in our lives, in our social relations which throw much light upon the wondrous plan of our salvation.

We have already seen some of the splendid actions of self-sacrificing love—in the family, in the community, in the state. We are also familiar with one person taking the place of others for certain purposes, and the others becoming entitled to the results of his action. Our member of Congress represents us in making laws. Our judges represent the people, interpreting and applying laws. Our governors and presidents represent the state and nation, enforcing the laws. Our President represents

the whole nation—a hundred million people to the whole world. This idea of representation runs through all our social life—in the family, the community, the nation, the race of mankind. There must be a tie of nature and a social recognition of it. Our President must be a citizen of our nation, and we recognize his ability by electing him to his office, and then we abide by the results of his action. This familiar idea of representation—one acting for others—is so inherent in our nature that, as with self-sacrificing love, it seems to have come from the nature of our Creator, God.

We are the creatures of God. He is infinitely above us. If He in His self-sacrificing love should consent to represent us and we should recognize that tie, the infinite dignity and worth of our representative would secure for us all that He secured for Himself, and by faith we receive as represented in Him our share. So Jesus Christ the Son of God became man—our representative received by faith. He lived a life absolutely free from all penalty due Him, but He endured our penalty, He entered into our condition, He died for our sins. He absolutely deserved all rewards of obedience to law. Now as He represents us, we are freed from all penalty, and we are entitled to all reward, as He has won these by representing us, and as we receive these by faith in Him.

We often find in the Scripture the thought of suretyship and redemption—sometimes fully described in social affairs and state relations in such a way to lift our thoughts to the great redemption wrought for us by Jesus Christ. In our state laws to-day we have suretyship in money matters, not in life matters; these are beyond the reach of human laws and human sacrifice. In money matters one often becomes surety for another and in time of disaster because of this suretyship redeems his friend from his distress. It may be for small amounts or large amounts, the principle is the same, and acknowledged by our laws as just, as real; it is not a fiction, it is a real transfer of debt based upon a tie of nature or friendship or mere business accommodation. Sometimes the relation may be very close. A father may become a surety for his son. He sets his son up in business, indorses his notes at the bank, or his borrowings from others. Time passes on; the notes or bonds expire. The son cannot pay them; the father pays the whole. Does the debt no longer exist? No, in all honour and affection the son owes the whole amount to the father, and besides a large debt of love for his having taken his son's place before the law in such money affairs.

That which is so familiar to us in our social relations throws some light upon the stupendous

subject of our relations to God and His relation to us. It is not a fiction of law, it is a real and important transaction. God teaches us about it in our relations with each other, in representation in suretyship, especially in ties of affection binding hearts and lives together.

This is the only article in the Apostles' Creed that mentions the word sin. It is very important to call things by their right names. We sometimes think of sin as an infirmity, a weakness; it is something more—choice enters into it. We sometimes speak of it as a mistake, an error; it is something more than choosing as right what proves to be wrong; often the only error is that of judging as desirable and profitable that which is in its nature injurious. We sometimes speak of ourselves as victims of circumstances, ensnared by temptation; but we reflect that temptation does not bring evil to us—it only appeals to the evil in us. The Scriptures say that sin is the transgression of law; that whosoever sins may be weak, may make a mistake, may be tempted, may be many other things, but the one thing that covers all and goes beyond all, and that he should always recognize is that he transgresses the law. Now such sin may come from willfulness; he does the forbidden thing because he wants to do it; or it may come from indifference to God. He may be a good man relatively, a good father, a good

citizen, but he pays no attention to the law of his being; he does not love God, nor his neighbour as himself. Let us not deceive ourselves. Sin is transgression of law—the law of God, the law of our being; we violate it, willfully or carelessly. Carelessly we do not care for our Father, God; willfully we will not let Him rule over us. We see this goes down to the depth of our nature; from this nature particular acts of sin arise. Deceit, for instance, may be negative, letting a man remain deceived as to a certain matter; or positive, deceiving him in the matter; but we say at once it transgresses the law of love of God and man. It is a bad thing among savages in Africa, among half civilized in the Philippines, a bad thing in the rural districts, in trading a horse; a bad thing in selling stock on Wall Street, in social life and in family life, in the slums of the city or on Fifth Avenue; a bad thing, a transgression of law, wherever found and in whatever degree of careless indifference to or willful disregard of God.

Now there are two things that we recognize at once from transgression of law. There is pollution in sin, that is its nature; it is the reverse of the moral health and well-being defined by the law of our being; it has many degrees, but that is its nature; and it confirms and deepens itself the longer it exists and the more it acts. The second thing arising from trans-

gression of law is guilt, its desert of punishment, the penalty of the broken law.

With reference to these both there are some things that cannot be changed and should never be ignored. Take the instance we have just considered—deceit. A certain man deceives a man or woman at a certain time. That is a fact; it cannot be changed—it is written indestructibly on the record of events. That act had an influence upon the one deceived, upon others who knew of it; it is written indestructibly on the sensitive record of human lives. That act had an influence upon the deceiver as well—he is a worse man for it. Shall we say that record is indestructible too? We must pause and reflect a while before we are forced to answer it must be. Surely neither pardon nor forgiveness can alter either of these stupendous facts. But the deceiver may recognize that he has sinned, that he has wronged the man or woman beyond repair, that he has thus wronged a creature of God whom God values highly, and in so doing he has wronged God. He also has wronged himself, made himself a worse man by his indulgence, and he also is a creature of God, whom God values highly, and so he has wronged God. He has sinned against God.

He begins to recognize the nature of sin; he begins to abhor himself, that he was capable

of such an act. He begins to see the extent of his sin, that he is capable of kindred acts, and he begins to abhor himself a sinner. Now he begins to ask, What does God think of me? Surely He must abhor sin, He must hate that which I recognize in myself as hateful. The penalty of broken law shows what God thinks of sin; it is His just indignation against sin. Then God hates me, is indignant with me. Hold on, friend! God will not cast you off while there is the slightest possibility of separating you from your sin. He will magnify the law, He will express His just indignation against its violation, and you are under its penalty. But He so loves you that He bears your penalty for you. He the great Judge, He the noble Governor, is also your Father, and never a father on earth loved a son as He loves you; so He will bear the penalty due you, and Jesus Christ bears it upon the cross, that He may free you from it.

Does this forgiving love that leads the Saviour to take your place and bear your curse appeal to you? Does it win your trust, your gratitude, your obedience? Then it saves you from more than the punishment of sin—it saves from sin itself. To be pronounced just, free from all penalty, entitled to the rewards of obedience—surely that is wonderful; but it is very little compared with forgiveness. To be

pardoned, to be saved from penalty, is as nothing compared with being saved from sin. In God's heart saving from penalty is a means of saving from sin itself. The forgiving love of God in bearing the penalty Himself awakens in our hearts abhorrence of sin, turning away from sin, a new spirit of obedience and love of God, and so saves from sin itself. Evil causing suffering may remain a large portion of our experiences in this life, but it has no longer the nature of penalty; it is God's fatherly love disciplining us out of our sinfulness. Defects may remain—the results of the weakening power of sin in us—but the general principles and direction of life are thoroughly changed; no longer away from God but now turned to Him in loving obedience.

It is told that Chrysostom, the golden mouthed orator, awakened the hatred of the emperor who called his counsellors and said, “How shall we injure Chrysostom?” One said, “Confiscate his property.” The Emperor answered, “That will not injure him. You only rob the poor he cares for.” Another said, “Banish him.” The Emperor answered, “That will not injure him. He will make friends wherever he goes.” Another said, “Kill him.” The Emperor answered, “That will not injure him—it will send him to heaven.” Then a wise counsellor said, “Induce him to sin.”

“Yes,” said the Emperor, “that would injure him, but it is the one thing we with all our power and influence cannot do, for he hates sin.” I know there are many to-day who cannot be induced to enter and pursue a known course of sin. The number embraces all who can say with the heart, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.” The forgiveness of a loving Father at infinite cost to Himself wins the forgiven to His loving obedience and service.

XIV.

This is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son and believeth on him, should have eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day.—JOHN 6: 40.

“THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY”

THE last words of this verse have been called the blessed refrain of this teaching of Christ; they are repeated four times. They sound like solemn, stately music heard in the darkness and the stillness of the night. “I will raise him up at the last day.” They seem to refer to the resurrection of the body as the culmination of the redeeming work of Christ beyond which there is no more evil.

Not only did John write these words as coming from the lips of Christ, His anticipation of final triumph, but Paul speaks to the bereaved Thessalonians: “Your dead shall share in the triumph of Christ; fallen asleep they shall rise first and be forever with the Lord.” Also to the Corinthians he writes: “Christ hath been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them which are asleep. They that are Christ’s will

be raised from the dead at his coming." So we find in the Apostles' Creed the clear statement: "I believe in the resurrection of the body." Here, as always, the "I believe" includes the intellectual acknowledgment of the fact and also the personal trust of the believer—Christ will raise me from the dead.

What are we to understand by the resurrection of the body? Of Christ's resurrection we have already meditated in the fifth article of the creed. He is the first-fruits. Of our resurrection, as we think of His, and of the general teaching of the Scripture, we recognize two facts, each hard to grasp in detail, but both clearly seen; they are identity and change. They seem contradictory, but in reality they explain each other, as we shall see. The resurrection of the body is taught dimly in some portions of Scripture—clearly in others. Christ speaks of it clearly and emphatically, and the Apostle Paul in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians likens the resurrection of the body both as to identity and change to that of Christ Himself.

The first important thing for us to recognize is that it is a truth revealed in the Scriptures. Here, as with regard to all such truths, we conclude that since both books, nature and the Scriptures, are from God, they do not contradict but they supplement each other. The resur-

rection of the body is not opposed by nature. In fact nature has many whisperings of it. Let us listen to one of these whisperings.

There are two great classes of the creation of God. The first is that of matter, revealed to us by our senses and by our consciousness as well. Some philosophies and religions look almost alone to matter. In ancient China there was the belief that the material principle was eternal; it was beneath all changing forms. The face of nature was feelingless, changeless, and all forms and beings were lights and shadows passing over it. In ancient Greece there was the idea of living matter. The face of nature was full of light and feeling; the spark of fire was in the eye, the tear of feeling was on the cheek, and the breath of life stirred the lips. But the spark went back to the flame, the tear-drop to the ocean, the breath to the air; only the elements remained. So with materialism to-day. Atoms of wonderful electrons highly endowed come together in certain relations and electricity results; in other relations and life results; in still other relations and mind results. The atoms separate again and mind goes out of existence. There of course is no resurrection here.

But the trouble is that only one kind of creation is being considered. The answer to this in all ages and now is the consciousness of man.

We know that thought, feelings of adoration, powers to see and to choose of the right are not properties of matter, but acts of the spirit. Thus we look at the other class of the creation of God. God is a pure spirit; He has created spiritual beings, some like ourselves in close union with the material creation. Some philosophies and religions look almost exclusively to the spiritual. In India all things are to be absorbed into the great spirit, are only the manifest breath of Brahm. No personal immortality here. In Greece we find the idea of the spirit living after the death of the body, but a limited existence, a kind of dream life in Hades. The Egyptians and Persians had the idea of the spirit being clothed in light, but its continued existence depended upon the preservation of the body; hence the mummies of Egypt were preserved, not to rise again, but to keep the spirit alive. So some Christian views of the resurrection drift towards a mere spirit life; they think sin resides in the flesh and the spirit will be freed at last, a pure spirit. But matter and spirit are not in conflict in this respect. Sin is a choice of the spirit as well as of the flesh: both are cursed by sin. Take away sin, and they are in harmony.

Herein then is the whispering of nature of the resurrection of the body. Man is both body and spirit. He is the link between the material

and the spiritual creations of God. If he becomes simply and forever a disembodied spirit, the link is broken; man as God created him, body and spirit, no longer exists. If man is immortal at all, he must be immortal as body as well as spirit, for so only is he man. If man is to be saved from sin at all he must be saved as body as well as spirit, for so only is he man. The whispering of nature is clear and distinct. Man is formed of the dust of the earth—of the material creation. God breathed into him and he became a living soul, after the likeness of God. Man is both matter and spirit, the link between the two, a union of the two. As we hear this whisper we recognize the completeness of the redeeming work of Christ, the Son of Man. His resurrection is the first-fruits. All in Him as their representative shall be raised like unto His resurrection, body and soul freed from all taint of sin, the whole, the complete man saved.

Hence both nature and Scripture teach us to look upon death as a temporary separation of body and soul; believers die in the Lord—they sleep in Jesus. The body as well as soul is redeemed; it belongs to Christ. Wonderful redemption! He who governs millions of stars watches over the graves of His saints, for He is God the all wise and the all loving. Listen to the Apostle Paul as he exults with the Philip-

pians: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able to subject all things to himself."

Now we are not taught that the whole body buried in the grave will be raised at the last day. Here again nature and Scripture agree. Nature says the body will go back to the dust: that its various particles of dust and gas and water will be absorbed by nature, and will be used by nature in its many forms of growth; but nature also teaches that the particles of matter forming our bodies now change frequently during the few years of our present life. So the Apostle speaks of fashioning anew our bodies, to be like Christ's glorious body. The changed body will be my body, each can say. The two great truths of the resurrection, as we said at the beginning, are identity—my body—and change, like Christ's glorious body.

Now we know there are several kinds of identity. The lowest is that of substance. A cup of water may be frozen and thawed; it may be diffused into steam, caught and condensed again; it may be resolved into its gases and combined again. It is the same water while we can trace the substance.

There is another and a higher kind of identity. We stand before Murillo's picture, “The Immaculate Conception,” in Paris. Wherein does its identity consist? Not in substance. Burn the canvas and the paint, and you might gather the substance again; but even Murillo if alive could not restore the painting. The identity consists in the form and colour, the expression of the adoration of the artist. Another and the highest kind of identity we know of is that of life. The acorn, the shoot, the sapling, the oak, the identity not of substance, nor of form, but of life. So the babe in the arms of the mother, the youth at college, the president who directs the affairs of a great nation, the same person, we know to be the same, but the identity is not of substance, or of form, but of life.

In what the identity of the resurrection body may consist we know not; it may be of all three kinds. A very little of the substance which has formed our dark bodies may be enough for our bodies of light: the form may be the same but greatly changed, freed from all defects; the life will undoubtedly be the same. My body, each one of us can say as we can say of our present bodies, though these with the passing years are wonderfully changed.

Turn now from the identity to the still more wonderful change in the resurrection of the

body. When we come to contemplate the change wrought upon our bodies by Christ at His coming, the completed redemption, it is astonishing how much the Scripture describes, when we bring its various teachings together.

We are assured in the first place that our resurrection body will be in the human form. So Christ, the first-fruits, rose from the dead. He was greatly changed, not subject to some of the conditions of our present life. He did not live with His disciples as of yore—He appeared and vanished at will—but whenever the disciples saw Him they knew Him. It is Jesus, they said, and they had lived with Him intimately and beyond any doubt knew Him. Not only will our resurrection bodies be as now in the human form but they will have a clear likeness to our present bodies. When Moses and Elias met Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration they were recognized as leaders in Israel. Elijah had not died. He had been taken to heaven in the chariot of fire. Moses had died and been buried by God. No man knew where was his grave. There is a strange passage in Jude about “Michael the Archangel contending with the devil about the body of Moses” which seems to hint that Moses appeared on the mount in his resurrection body; both talked with Jesus about His death on the cross, and Christ’s transfiguration showed the kingdom of

the heavens touching the earth as a glorious vision of the future. Now as we turn to the enraptured reasoning of the Apostle Paul in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians we see both the identity and the four great changes in our resurrection body.

He says it will be an incorruptible body. Our present bodies constantly waste away; while life flourishes they are as constantly restored. As life grows feeble in sickness or age the bodies fail; as life goes out corruption rules. “It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.” Not subject to any sickness, to any failure of power, to the feebleness of age. The incorruptible body.

The Apostle then teaches us further. It will be a glorious body. The body now is the most highly organized, finely finished and beautiful of the known creations of God. But this is a dishonour to the coming glory, for the curse of sin has passed upon it, and it goes down to death. “It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.” The body comes forth from death conquered. No curse clouds it. It is raised a glorious body.

The disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration fainted at the sight of the glory of Christ, and of Moses and Elias. Christ after His resurrection remained on earth forty days and then came the ascension to the throne of God. His

body was somewhat changed but not glorified until His ascension. After that we have glimpses of His glorious body. Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God in glory. Paul saw Him on the way to Damascus, and was blinded by the glory. John saw Him in Patmos, when Christ's countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength, and he fell at His feet as one dead. But John, the familiar disciple, knew Jesus though He was glorified. Thus our body of glory will have no defect. All shadow of sin will be removed from the finest creation of God. Our glorious body will be like that of the Son of Man now in heaven. So also as John knew Christ on Patmos we shall know our familiar ones, our loved ones, in more than our highest ideal of beauty. Beyond anything we have ever known or dreamed shall be our bodies of glory.

What more can Paul say? It will be a body of power. We have great power now, but it is only weakness and ends in weakness compared with the coming power. Much of our power now comes from our grasping the powers of nature; we have grasped the power of steam, the power of electricity; but of how much we are still in ignorance. Our dominion over nature while large is, we all recognize, not complete because of ignorance, because of disobeying laws, because of sin. We cannot even hin-

der the decay of our powers; we die after a few years. “It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power.” The power we shall share with Christ—shall reign with Him. Complete power. What new senses we may have we know not. What new power of present senses we know not. What new powers in nature about us we may know and grasp we know not. Shall the eye unaided have greater power than now with telescope? Shall we pass, as now our thoughts may pass, with the rapidity of thought from star to star in the vast universe—contemplating the glory of God, flying to do the will of God? These are not wild dreams, unfounded expectations, “for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what God hath prepared for them that love him.”

The Apostle has one more statement of a marvellous change. “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” Our present bodies are fitted for the present life. The changed resurrection body will be fitted for the spiritual life. Our eyes are often dull to the good and beautiful, and strong to the evil and the ugly. So our tongue and our hands are often prone to the evil of our nature and surroundings. Then our eyes will see new beauties of the good, our hands will be ready servants of God and our tongues full of His

praise. My body, identity, but marvellously changed to the purity of the heavenly life. Even now the spirit is sometimes so pure and strong that it shines through our natural body. So Moses' face shone as he came down from the mount of vision. So Stephen's face, as he bore witness for Christ, was as the face of an angel. Perhaps we have seen some face shine with a saintly light—a mother beautiful in character, or a father strong in allegiance to Christ. So as we look forward to the resurrection the identity is secured, it is sown, it is raised, and the change is beyond our highest possible thought. It is the change of the new life—the body is incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual.

Now what is the Resurrection? It is the culminating glory of the Person and work of Christ. By faith we have seen His glory in eternity, the beloved of the Father; in creation, bringing the glory of the universe into being; in redemption His glory of self-sacrifice as He hangs upon the cross; in heaven His glory upon the throne of universal dominion. But we look forward to His complete, triumphal glory when He shall come again with all the holy angels with Him and at His word of command His redeemed ones will arise in glory and be forever with the Lord. As when a great artist removes the veil from his masterpiece and says

to his admiring friends, See my life-work, so
God shall say to the assembled universe, See
my finished work. As the visible heavens, stars
and systems are shining with light and so de-
clare my glory. As ye pure spirits around my
throne are shining in holiness and so declare my
glory. So behold the being, man, who joins
the two, the material glory and the spiritual
glory; he has been long clouded by sin but the
cloud I have driven away. See the countless
ranks of mankind stand forth, the glory of the
material and the glory of the spiritual combined
forever. See Jesus Christ, my beloved Son with
His redeemed ones, redeemed in body and soul.
He the first-fruits, they joined to Him now in
their order.

What comfort this brings to us dying men!
We are called to bury our beloved dead.

“There is no flock however watched and tended
But one dead-lamb is there.
There is no fireside howsoe’er defended
But has one vacant chair.”

We mourn the parting, but have a glorious
hope. Our loved ones are with Christ now, and
blessed; they will be raised again when Christ
comes, glorious ones.

As a mother puts her tired children to bed
when night comes, kisses them good-night and
prays by the bedside, her heart is filled with love

and joy, for she knows that when the morning light comes they will rise again, rosy with health and happiness, to a new day.

We look forward to our own death. We shall lie down in the grave. We need not try to stay the hand of corruption, for we must be changed. Death is ours. Our Saviour has passed through the grave to the light and glory of the resurrection. Death is now the opening of the gates into a glorious life.

“Why should we start at the creaking of the door,
When we know there is light and welcome in the
room beyond.”

XV.

And this is life eternal that they should know thee the only true God and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.

—JOHN 17:3.

“THE LIFE EVERLASTING”

THERE are two remarkable things about these words of our Saviour. The first is that this is the only time of which we have any record that He used His full name by which we now know Him—Jesus Christ. Jesus, the Saviour and Christ, the anointed one, the prophet, priest and king—the names so frequently given Him by the Apostles after His resurrection. The added saying, “whom thou didst send,” and the prayer, “glorify thy Son that thy Son may glorify thee,” and the clear statement that “God had given him authority over all flesh to give Christ’s full eternal life to all God had given him,” these together show consciousness of both His divine nature and mission.

The second remarkable thing is that our Saviour here gives us a definition of eternal life—a full description of it, which may thus

be regarded as authoritative. The last statement of the Apostles' Creed is, "I believe in the life everlasting." I believe in its existence, I trust I have it in my experience.

We cannot do better than attend to our Saviour's description of eternal life. What is it? Men are apt to form wrong views of the life everlasting. We think mainly of its duration—conscious existence prolonged into eternity. Of course this is part of the truth as taught in the Scriptures, but it is a very small part of it. We see at once that to prolong the life of a fly into eternity would fall far short even of our idea of eternal life. The first glance at this teaching of Christ puts the emphasis not on duration but upon the kind of life that endures. The kind of life belonging to eternity is to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. It begins now, it may be experienced to-day, and in its very nature it is eternal—the highest kind of life known in the wide creation, the kind of life that is deathless; it cannot pass out of existence—it must live forever.

Is there a kind of life that can never die? Is there an eternal life? There may be a general impression that the Bible says there is and that nature says there is not. This is a great mistake. The Bible and nature never contradict each other. Nature has many striking teachings concerning eternal life, beginning with the

lowest form of life and showing an advancing principle or power in all its ascending ranks.

Nature teaches first of all that life even of the lowest grade is the gift of God. We may know all the elements that compose a living organism. We may gather these from earth and air and sea in exact proportion and in proper condition. All is dead; no living organism results, wait we ever so patiently. The blade of grass, we know all its elements, but we cannot make it live. The summer insect, we may know all its elements, but we cannot make it live. Whence the life? Only from the realm of life. Whence this realm of life? Only from the great Life-Giver—from God, the ever living God.

Nature in the next place shows us a vast profusion of life, in various grades. The Apostle Paul in First Corinthians speaks of various kinds of vegetable life also; of the bodies of men, of beasts, of birds, of fishes, of bodies of the earth and of the heavens, of one star differing from another star in glory. The astronomer tells of other systems beside our solar system that probably are inhabited by various races of beings. The geologist tells of the ranks of beings who have lived upon the earth in past ages. The biologist and zoologist describe innumerable ranks of beings living now upon the earth.

What does the Apostle teach? What do scientists teach? What does the universe teach? All teach the one clear lesson—there is no limit to God's creating power.

Nature shows us in the third place a remarkable law of life. The principle of life forms from the elements of nature many organisms, each after its own kind. Now the various grades of organisms enrich themselves and prolong their existence by a power within them of adapting themselves to their surroundings. This power is of various degrees, but its nature is the same, and the ascending degree seems to be the increasing power of knowing, and so of adapting itself to its wider surroundings. This is a strange intimation of the knowing Christ speaks of in the text. The lower ranks of life are in harmony with few surroundings and so are poor, weak, and quickly pass away. The higher ranks are in harmony with wider surroundings—are rich, strong in knowing, and so live longer. Look at this broad spreading tree in the open field—the wide universe for its surrounding, but it knows nothing of it. Here crawls a snail; it knows little, is slow of movement; an ox comes and crushes it, a bird swoops down and eats it. The bird has higher life, knows more, is in harmony with wider surroundings. The ox comes and the bird flies up to the branches of the tree. The frost comes

and the bird flies to warmer climes. Here comes a man. He has fuller knowledge; he foresees the coming winter. He cuts down the tree for fuel, kills the ox for food; he stretches forth his hands and all climes minister to his needs. He keeps an active, far-reaching mind. He looks up to the sky. He reads books in the long winter evenings and distant suns are part of his environment. So in nature the grades of life in their power of adapting themselves in growing degree to their surroundings and so enriching and prolonging their existence fairly force the mind to the conception of a life having a power of adapting itself to eternal surroundings and so becoming eternal in nature and existence; and further they show a probability that God, the life-giver who made the lower forms in such profusion and in ascending scale, would make the higher life more like and in harmony with Himself.

This brings us to the fourth great teaching of nature, that the probable eternal life must be of the spirit and in harmony with spiritual surroundings. The surroundings that are material as far as we know them are so subject to change that all life in harmony with them alone must change, must pass away. Besides a possible catastrophe, as in the geologic ages, nature intimates that the time will come when the sun will die out and the stars fade away and our cold

dark earth will have no living being upon it as it flies through space. We must look for eternal life above changing matter to the realm of spirit—a spirit in harmony with God the Spirit, the great Life-Giver.

Now when we come to the teachings of the Bible they only carry on and make more plain the teachings of nature. There is a spirit existence which the Bible calls death—the death of sin—alive in some sense but dead to harmony with God, in rebellion and estrangement from Him. In our material life here we know of existence deprived of full rich life. A man is deaf; he is alive, and still he is dead to all the realm of sounds; music hath no charms—the voices of loved ones never reach him. A man is blind; all beauty of form and movement, of light and colour is shut out from him. A man may be alive and still insensible. Touch him and he feels it not. The hand of love upon his brow awakens no response. So the spirit may exist and still be blind, deaf and insensible to God—may be cut off by its own act from all harmony with spiritual surroundings, cut off from God. This surely is not eternal life. We can hardly think of it as mere eternal existence; while it lasts it is, as the Bible says, death—not knowing God.

Here we recall the saying of our Saviour just before His description of eternal life. It is the

glory of God to give, to send Christ into the world, to bestow eternal life, to take the blindness, the deafness, the insensibility of the soul away, to redeem sinners from their sins. “I believe in the life everlasting”—the full life of the spirit. The Saviour describes it as knowing God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. This is evidently a peculiar kind of knowledge—the highest conceivable.

Nature teaches that life is enriched and prolonged by the knowledge of one's environment. This is so of man, who stands at the head of all beings upon the earth. Now man's environment is wide and varied, and man's knowledge of it may be great and may bring him into harmony with it in a large degree. Our knowledge of nature and its forces, of all the sciences and the arts; our knowledge of our fellow men and their achievements—the history, the literature, the government of the world; our knowledge of our fellow men about us in all the affairs of this life, all we call civilization—its stores of the past, its rich gifts of the present—how this wide knowledge enriches and ennobles life and prolongs it as well. Our knowledge may possess all we have just recounted and yet not be eternal life.

Eternal life is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, to know the person God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

'This is the highest conceivable knowledge, that of the personal God.

Now there are three ways in which we may know a person, and it seems all three are needed to make our knowledge full.

There are two great truths of which man is conscious: I am—I have personal existence; and God is—beyond all my eyes behold in the wide universe God is. He has given me my personality. He too is a person. I am from Him, dependent upon Him and somewhat like Him, a person.

The first way in which we may know a person is by knowing something of his works. We may never see the man—he may have passed away centuries ago—but he was the builder of some vast cathedral; he was an artist of some great painting or oratorio or poetry; he was a statesman in some turning point of the history of the race; or he may be living now and we are familiar with his works. We may know much of his ability and character from his works. So we may know much of God from His works in nature—about His power and His character; but it is a limited and distant knowledge. The worship of God in nature alone is the worship of eternal silence.

The second way in which we may know a person is from what he says of himself and from what others say of him. The great artist

of centuries ago has written his autobiography, or his intimate friend and admirer has written about him as he saw and knew him. So the great statesman of the present day tells in some great speech of his plans and purposes, or some one who is close to him by many ties of co-operation writes about him fully and frankly. It is obvious our knowledge of him in this way is much larger and finer than in the first way; and if it can be added to the first it widens and enriches our knowledge greatly.

So from nature we turn to the Bible to know God. We see how He reveals Himself supernaturally in His dealings with our fellow men; we hear what He says of Himself in precept and in promise, and of how He is just and righteous and loving; how He calls back wandering men and welcomes their trust and love. We see what God says and does, and we also hear what men who have trusted Him, and have followed Him in His plans and purposes, and so learned of Him, say of Him. It is obvious this knowledge of God is larger and finer than that we have of Him from nature alone, and that added to the first it brings Him near to us. Still this combined knowledge is largely knowing about God as distinguished from knowing God.

The third way in which we know a person is by intimate companionship with him. We have

much in common with him; he may be greater and higher in position than we are or can ever hope to be, but there is something in us that discerns and appreciates something in him, and so learns to know him intimately. He is our friend—admits us to his confidence—and we find in him qualities we admire, and so know him, and we constantly grow in this knowing. We recognize that one must have some of the same quality in himself before he can see and appreciate that quality in another—truthfulness, it may be, or purity, or devotion to the right; and that whatever the quality is it grows by fellowship with the other. We recognize this is the highest and fullest knowledge one person can have of another; that it must be added to the other kinds of knowledge to make our knowledge complete. We know not only about the person, we know the person himself. In our meditation upon the Apostles' Creed this has been continually kept in mind. I believe, as we have passed over each article, has included I have an intellectual acceptance of the truth about the being described, and I have also the trust in him—the experience of the truth. This is evidently the kind of knowledge Christ means when He says, "This is eternal life, to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent." To know Him in His works of creation and redemption, to know Him as He speaks of Him-

self and as others tell of Him, and also to know Him by my personal trust in Him as my Father and Saviour, the trust that recognizes His goodness and love, that finds in Him a full supply for my penitence, for my longing for the good, for my spiritual hunger for spiritual fellowship; to find a full response to all my longing for Him, this is eternal life.

This knowledge may be lower in degree than we desire but still it is the kind of knowing that brings us into harmony with our eternal surroundings, with the eternal God, and so in its nature it is eternal life. The degree may be increased, even here and now, and must constantly grow in more favourable surroundings. We guard our physical life against all its foes; so we are to guard this high life from coolness of love of God or wanderings from Him. We feed our lower life with sustaining food; so we are to feed this high life with prayer and devotion. We exercise our lower life to keep it in health and win its support; so we are to exercise the higher life by following Christ and giving ourselves to His service. The more we are with Christ the better and fuller will be our knowing Him.

What shall we say now of heaven? Surely it is not simply prolonged existence. Far more, it is endless development in knowing God in Christ. The more we grow like Him the more

we will know Him. God in Christ is infinite in all His perfections and eternal in His nature. We will have the eternal life begun now, and passing through the valley of death, in ever growing power and happiness on the uplands of heaven. This eternal life can never be exhausted; it must constantly grow in knowing God. We have the bud here, there is the flower.

This is the record that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. To trust Him, love Him, know Him—this now and here is eternal life. It can never die; it will ever grow in fullness of power and happiness, in complete harmony with its eternal surroundings.

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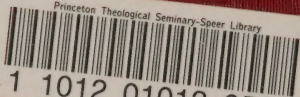
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